

TWENTY-THREE
S E R M O N S
O N
V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S.

To which are added,
Several P R A Y E R S.

By GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A. B.
Late of Pembroke College, OXFORD.

A NEW EDITION,
REVISED and CORRECTED by the AUTHOR.



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THIRTY THREE
SERMONS

WILLIAM LLOYD GABRIEL

SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY



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SER-

S E R M O N I *.

The MARRIAGE of *Cana*.

JOHN ii. 11.

This Beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his Glory; and his Disciples believed on him.

I HAVE more than once had Occasion to observe, that the chief End St. *John* had in View, when he wrote his Gospel, was to prove the Divinity of JESUS CHRIST, [that Word, who not only was from Everlasting with GOD, but also was really GOD blessed for evermore] against those Arch-Hereticks *Ebion* and *Corinthus*, whose damnable and pernicious Principles too many follow in these last Days. — For this Purpose you may take Notice, that he is more particular than any other Evangelist, in relating our LORD's divine Discourses, as also his glorious Miracles which he wrought, not by a Power derived from another, like *Moses*, and other Prophets, but from a Power inherent in himself, as he was really and essentially GOD. — The Words of the Text have a Reference to a notable Mi-

racle which JESUS CHRIST perform'd, and thereby gave Proof of his eternal Power and Godhead.

—*This Beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his Glory; and his Disciples believed on him.*

The Miracle here spoken of is that of our LORD's turning Water into Wine at a Marriage Feast.—I design at present (by GOD's Help) to make some Observations on the Circumstances and Certainty of the Miracle, and then conclude with some practical Instructions; that you, by hearing how JESUS CHRIST has shew'd forth his Glory, may, by the Operation of GOD's Spirit upon your Hearts, with the Disciples mention'd in the Text, be brought to believe on him.

First then, I would make some Observations on the Miracle itself.

Verse 1. and 2.—*And the third Day there was a Marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the Mother of Jesus was there. — And both Jesus was called, and his Disciples to the Marriage.*—By our LORD's being at a Feast we may learn, that Feasting upon solemn Occasions is not absolutely unlawful.—But then we must be exceeding careful at such Seasons, that the Occasion be solemn, and that we go not for the sake of Eating and Drinking, but to edify one another in Love.—Feasting upon other Accounts, and in any other Manner, I think absolutely unlawful for the Followers of JESUS CHRIST.—Because if we eat and drink out of any other View, it cannot be to the Glory of GOD.—The Son of Man, we know, came Eating and Drinking. If a Pharisee asked him to come to his House, our LORD went, and sat down with him.—But then we find his Discourse was always such as tended to the Use of Edifying.—

ing.—*We* may then, no doubt, go and do likewise.—But for Persons that call themselves Christians, especially Ministers of CHRIST, to go at certain Festivals (as I know is the Custom even of some Religious Societies, and their Lecturers) only to eat and drink, and after that rise up to play, is so far from being a Christian Duty, that I am persuaded it is as *real* (if not so *great*) *Idolatry* as the Children of *Israel* were guilty of when they did *so*, and danced round the Golden Calf.

We may observe further, that if our LORD was present at a Marriage Feast, then, to deny Marriage to any Order of Men is certainly a Doctrine of Devils.—No,—*Marriage*, says the Apostle, *is honourable in all*.—Our Lord graced the Marriage Feast with his first publick Miracle. It was an Institution of GOD himself, even in Paradise,—and therefore, no doubt, lawful for all Christians, even for those who are made perfect in Holiness thro' the Faith of JESUS CHRIST. But then we may learn the Reason why we have so many unhappy Marriages in the World; it is because the Parties concerned do not call JESUS CHRIST by Prayer, nor ask the Advice of his true Disciples when they are about to Marry.—No,—CHRIST and Religion are the last Things that are consulted; and no Wonder then, if Matches of the Devil's making (as all such are, which are contracted only on account of outward Beauty, or for filthy Lucre's Sake) prove most miserable, and grievous to be borne.

And I cannot but dwell a little on this Particular, because I am persuaded the Devil cannot lay a greater Snare for young Christians, than to tempt them unequally to yoke themselves with Unbelievers, as are all who are not born again of

iv *The MARRIAGE of Cana.*

GOD.—This was the Snare wherein the Sons of GOD were entangled before the Flood, and one great Cause why GOD brought that Flood upon the World. For what says *Moses, Genesis vi. 2, 3. The Sons of GOD*, that is, the Posterity of pious *Seth, saw the Daughters of Men*, that is, of the Posterity of wicked *Cain, that they were fair*, not that they were pious, *and they took them Wives of all which they chose*, not which GOD chose for them. And what follows? *And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh*, that is, even the few righteous Souls being now grown carnal by their ungodly Marriages, the whole World was altogether become abominable, and had made themselves Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction.—I might instance further, the Care the ancient Patriarchs took to chuse Wives for their Children out of their own religious Families, and how it was one great Mark of *Esau's* Rebellion against his Father, that he took unto himself Wives of the Daughters of the *Canaanites*, who were Strangers to the Covenant of Promise made unto his Fathers. — But I forbear. — Time will not permit me to enlarge here. — Let it suffice to advise all, whenever they enter into a Marriage State, to imitate the People of *Cana in Galilee*, to call CHRIST to the Marriage. — He certainly will hear, and chuse for you,—and you will always find his Choice to be the best. — He then will direct you to such Yoke-fellows as shall be Helps meet for you in the great Work of your Salvation, and then he will also enable you to serve him without Distraction, and cause you to walk, as *Zachary and Elizabeth*, in all his Commandments and Ordinances blameless.

But

The MARRIAGE of Cana.

▼

But to proceed.—Who these Persons were that called our Lord and his Disciples to the Marriage, is not certain.—Some (because it is said, that the Mother of *Jesus* was there) have supposed that they were related to the Blessed Virgin, and that therefore our Lord and his Disciples were invited on her Account. However that be, it should seem they were not very rich (for what had rich Folks to do with a despised *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, and his mean Followers?) because we find they were unfurnished with a sufficient Quantity of Wine for a large Company, and therefore, *when they wanted Wine*, Verse 3. *the Mother of Jesus*, having, as it should seem by her applying to him so readily on this Occasion, even in his private Life, seen some Instances of his miraculous Power, *saith unto him, They have no Wine*.—She thought it sufficient only to inform him of the Wants of the Host, knowing that he was as ready to give as she to ask.—In this Light the Blessed Virgin's Request appears to us at the first View, but if we examine our Lord's Answer, we shall have Reason to think there was something which was not right; for *Jesus* saith unto her, Verse 4.—*Woman, what have I to do with thee?* Observe, he calls her Woman, not Mother; to shew her, that tho' she was his Mother, as he was Man, yet she was his Creature, as he was GOD.—*What have I to do with thee?* Think you that I must work Miracles at your Bidding? For some have thought that the Holy Virgin spoke as tho' she had an Authority over him, which was a proud Motion, and our LORD therefore checks her for it. And if JESUS CHRIST would not turn a little Water into Wine, whilst he was

here on Earth, at her Command, how idolatrous is that Church, and how justly do we separate from her, which prescribes Forms, wherein the Virgin is desired to command her Son to have Compassion on us!

But notwithstanding the Holy Virgin was blameable in this Respect, yet she hath herein led Rich and Poor an Example which it is your Duty to follow. — You that are rich, and live in ceiled Houses, learn of her to go into the Cottages of the Poor; your Lord was not above it, and why should you? And when you do visit them, like the Virgin-Mother, examine their Wants; and when you see they have no Wine, and are ready to perish with Hunger, shut not up your Bowels of Compassion, but bless the LORD for putting it into your Power to administer to their Necessities. Believe me, such Visits would do you Good. — You would learn then to be thankful that GOD has given you Bread enough, and to spare. — And I am persuaded, every *Mite* that you bestow in feeding the Hungry and cloathing the Naked Disciples of JESUS CHRIST, will afford you more Satisfaction at the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, than all the Thousands squander'd away in Balls and Assemblies, and such like Entertainments of the Devil.

You that are poor in this World's Goods, and thereby are disabled from helping, yet you may learn from the Virgin to pray for one another. — She could not turn the Water into Wine, but she could entreat her Son to do it, — and so may you; and doubt not the LORD's hearing you; for GOD has chosen the Poor in this World rich in Faith, — and, by your fervent Prayers, you may draw down many a Blessing on your poor fellow Creatures

tures Heads.—Oh that I may ever be remembered by you before the Throne of our dear Lord JESUS! But what shall we say, Will our LORD entirely disregard this Motion of his Mother? No, tho' he check her with *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* yet he intimates that he would do as she desired by and by.—*Mine Hour*, says he, *is not yet come*.—As tho' he had said, The Wine is almost, but not quite out;—when they are come to an Extremity, and sensible of the Want of my Assistance, then will I shew forth my Glory, that they may behold it, and believe on ME.

Thus, Sirs, hath our LORD been frequently pleased to deal with me, and, I doubt not, with many of you also.—Often, often, when I have found his Presence as it were hid from Soul, and his Comforts well nigh gone, I have went unto him complaining, that I had no Wine, no Visit and Token of his Love, as usual.—Sometimes he has seemed to turn a deaf Ear to my Request, and as it were said,—*What have I to do with thee?*—which has made me go sorrowing all the Day long; so foolish was I, and faithless before him.—for I have always found he loved me notwithstanding, as he did *Lazarus*, tho' he stay'd two Days after he heard he was sick.—But when my Hour of Extremity has been come, and my Will broke, then hath he lifted up the Light of his blessed Countenance afresh; he has shewed forth his Glory, and made me ashamed for disbelieving him who turned my Water into Wine!—Be not then discouraged if the Lord does not immediately seem to regard the Voice of your Prayer, when you cry unto him.—The Holy Virgin we find was not; no, she was convinced his Time was

the best Time, and therefore, Verse 5. *saith unto the Servants, (Oh that we could follow her Advice!) whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

And now behold the Hour is come, when the Eternal SON OF GOD will shew forth his Glory. The Circumstance of the Miracle is very remarkable,—Verse 6. — *And there were set six Water-pots of Water, after the Manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three Firkins a-piece.*—The Manner of this purifying we have an Account of in the other Evangelists, especially St. Mark, who informs us, that the *Pharisees*, and all the *Jews*, except they wash their Hands oft, eat not; and when they come from the Market, except they wash, they eat not.—This was a superstitious Custom;—but however, we may learn from it, whenever we come in from conversing with those that are without, to purify our Hearts by Self-Examination and Prayer;—for it is hard to go thro' the World, and to be kept unspotted from it.

Observe further, Verse 7. — *Jesus saith unto them, not to his own Disciples, but unto the Servants of the House, who were Strangers to the Holy JESUS, and whom the Virgin had before charged to do whatsoever he said unto them;—to these Jesus saith, Fill the Water-pots with Water.—And they filled them to the Brim.—And he saith unto them, Verse 8. Draw out now, and bear to the Governor of the Feast.—And they bear it.*—How our LORD turned the Water into Wine we are not told.—What have we to do with that?—Why should we desire to be wise above what is written?—It is sufficient for the Manifestation of his glorious Godhead, that we are assured he did do it.—For we are told, Verse 9, 10. *When*

the Ruler of the Feast had tasted the Water that was made Wine, and knew not whence it was (but the Servants that drew the Water knew) the Governor of the Feast called the Bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every Man at the Beginning doth set forth good Wine, and when they have well drunk, that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good Wine until now.

To explain this Passage, you must observe, it was the Custom of the *Jews*, nay even of the Heathens themselves, (to the Shame of our Christian baptized Heathens be it spoken) at their publick Feasts to chuse a Governor, who was to oversee and regulate the Behaviour of the Guests, and to take Care that all Things were carried on with Decency and Order. To this Person then did the Servants bear the Wine; and we may judge how rich it was by his Commendation of it, *Every Man at the Beginning, &c.*—And judge ye then, whether JESUS did not shew forth his Glory, and whether you have not good Reason, like the Disciples here mentioned, to believe on him?

Thus, my Brethren, I have endeavoured to make some Observations on the Miracle itself.—But alas! this is only the outward Court thereof, the Veil is yet before our Eyes;—turn *that* aside, and we shall see such hidden Mysteries couched under it, as will make our Hearts to dance for Joy, and fill our Mouths with Praise for evermore!

But here I cannot help remarking what a sad Inference one of our Masters of *Israel*, in a printed Sermon, has lately drawn from this Commendation of the Bridegroom.—His Words are these.—“ Our Blessed Saviour came Eating and Drink-

“ing, was present at Weddings, and other En-
 “tertainments, (tho’ I hear of his being only at
 “one;) nay, at one of them (which I suppose
 “is that of which I am now discoursing) work’d
 “a Miracle to make Wine, when it is plain there
 “had been more drank than was absolutely ne-
 “cessary for the Support of Nature, and conse-
 “quently something had been indulged to Plea-
 “sure and Chearfulness.* ” —

I am sorry such Words should come from the
 Mouth and Pen of a dignified Clergyman of the
 Church of *England*. — Alas! how is she fallen!
 or at least, in what Danger must her tottering
 Ark be, when such unhallow’d Hands are stretch’d
 out to support it! Well may I bear patiently to
 be stiled a Blasphemer, and a setter forth of strange
 Doctrines, — when my dear Lord JESUS is thus
 traduced; — and when those who pretend to preach
 in his Name, urge this Example to patronize Li-
 centiousness and Excess. — ’Tis true (as I observed
 at the Beginning of this Discourse) “our Blessed
 “Saviour did come Eating and Drinking; he
 “was present at a Wedding, and other Enter-
 “tainments; nay, at one of them work’d a Mi-
 “racle to make Wine, (you see I have been mak-
 “ing some Observations on it) but then it is not
 “plain there had been more Wine drank than
 “was absolutely necessary for the Support of Na-
 “ture; much less does it appear, that something
 “had been indulged to Pleasure and Chearful-
 “ness.” —

The Governor does indeed say, *When Men
 have well drunken*, but it no where appears that

* See Dr. Trap, in his Sermon against being Righ-
 teous over-much, Page 17.

they were the Men.—Is it to be supposed that the most Holy and Unspotted Lamb of God, who was manifested to destroy the Works of the Devil, and who, when at a Pharisee's House, took Notice of even the Gestures of those with whom he sat at Meat; Is it to be supposed, I say, that our dear Redeemer, whose constant Practice it was to tell People they must deny themselves, and take up their Crosses daily; who bid his Disciples take heed least at any Time their Hearts might be over-charged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness; Can it be supposed that such a self-denying JESUS should now turn six large Water-pots of Water into the richest Wine, to encourage Excess and Drunkenness in Persons, who, according to this Writer, had indulged to Pleasure and Chearfulness *already*? — Had our LORD sat by, and seen them indulge, without telling them of it, would it not be a Sin? But to insinuate he not only did this, but also turned so much Water into Wine, to increase that Indulgence; — this is making CHRIST a Minister of Sin indeed.—What is this but using him like the *Pharisees* of old, who called him a Glutton, and a Wine-bibber? — Alas! how may we expect our dear Lord's Enemies will treat him, when he is thus wounded in the House of his seeming Friends? — Sirs, if you follow such Doctrine as this, you will not be *Righteous*, but I am persuaded you will be *Wicked over-much*.

But GOD forbid you should think our LORD behaved so much unlike himself in this Matter.—No, he had nobler Ends in View, when he wrought this Miracle. One the Evangelist mentions in the Words of the Text, namely, *to shew forth*

forth his Glory, or to give a Proof of his eternal Power and Godhead.

Here seems to be an Allusion to the Appearance of GOD in the Tabernacle, which this same Evangelist takes Notice of in his first Chapter, where he says, *The Word*, that is, *Jesus Christ, was made Flesh, and dwelt*, or (as it is rendered in the Margin) *Tabernacled amongst us*. — Our dear LORD, tho' Very GOD of Very GOD, and also most perfect and glorious in himself as Man, was pleased to throw a Veil of Flesh over this his great Glory, when he came to make his Soul an Offering for Sin. — And that the World might know and believe in him as the Saviour of all Men, he perform'd many Miracles, and this in particular; — for thus speaks the Evangelist. — *This first, &c.*

This then was the chief Design of our LORD's turning the Water into Wine. — But there are more which our LORD may be supposed to have had in View, some of which I shall proceed to mention.

Secondly then, he might do this to reward the Host for calling him and his Disciples to the Marriage. — JESUS CHRIST will not be behind-hand with those that receive him or his Followers, *for his Name's Sake*. — Those who thus honour him, he will honour. — A Cup of cold Water given in the Name of a Disciple, shall in no wise lose its Reward. — He will turn Water into Wine. — Tho' those who abound in Alms-deeds, out of a true *Faith in, and Love for JESUS*, may seem as it were to *throw their Bread upon the Waters*, yet they shall find it again after many Days. — For they that give to the Poor out of this Principle,
lend

lend unto the LORD, and look whatsoever they lay out, it shall be repay'd them again.—Even in this Life, God often orders good Measure pressed down and running over, to be returned into his Servants Bosoms.—It is the same in Spirituals.—To him that hath, and improves what he hath, for the Sake of CHRIST and his Disciples, *shall be given, and he shall have Abundance.*—Brethren, I would not boast ; but, to my Master's Honour and free Grace be it spoken, I can prove this true by happy Experience.—When I have considered that I am a Child, and cannot speak, and I have seen so many of you come out into the Wilderness to be fed, I have often said within myself, What can I do with my little Stock of Grace and Knowledge among so great a Multitude? — But, at my LORD's Command, I have given you to eat of such spiritual Food as I had, and before I have done speaking, have had my Soul richly fed with the Bread which cometh down from Heaven.—Thus shall it be done to all such who are willing to spend, and be spent for CHRIST or his Disciples ; for there is no Respect of Persons with God.

Thirdly, Our LORD's turning the Water, which was poured out so plentifully, into Wine, is a Sign of the plentiful pouring out of his Spirit into the Hearts of Believers.—The Holy Spirit is in Scripture compared unto Wine ; and therefore the Prophet calls us to buy Wine as well as Milk, that is, the Spirit of Love, which fills and glads the Soul as it were with new Wine.—The Apostle alludes to this, when he bids the *Ephesians* not to be drunk with Wine, *wherein is Excess, but be filled with the Spirit.*—And our Lord shews us thus much by chusing Wine ; to shew forth the
Strength

Strength and Refreshment of his Blood in the blessed Sacrament.—I know these Terms are unintelligible to natural Men,—they can no more understand me than if I spake to them in an unknown Tongue,—for they are only to be spiritually discerned.—To you then that are spiritual do I speak, to you that are justified by Faith, and feel the Blessed Spirit of JESUS CHRIST working upon your Hearts,—you can judge of what I say; you have already (I am persuaded) been as it were filled with new Wine by the Inspiration of his Holy Spirit!—But alas! you have not yet had half your Portion;—these are only Earnests, and, in Comparison, but Shadows of good Things to come;—our LORD keeps his best Wine for you till the last;—and tho' you have drunk deep of it already, yet he intends to give you more:—He will not leave you, 'till he has filled you to the Brim, 'till you are ready to cry out, Lord, stay thine Hand, thy poor Creatures can hold no more!—Be not straiten'd in your own Bowels, since JESUS CHRIST is not straiten'd in his.—Open your Hearts as wide as ever you will, the Spirit of the Lord shall fill them.—CHRIST deals with true Believers as *Elijah* did with the poor Woman, whose Oil encreased to pay her Husband's Debts,—as long as she brought Pitchers, the Oil continued.—It did not cease till she ceased bringing Vessels to contain it.—My Brethren, our Hearts are like those Pitchers;—open them freely by Faith, and the Oil of God's free Gift, the Oil of Gladness, the Love of GOD through CHRIST shall be continually pouring in;—for Believers are to be filled with all the Fulness of GOD.

Fourthly, Our LORD's turning Water into Wine, and keeping the best until the last, may shew forth the Glory of the latter Days of his Marriage Feast with his Church.—Great Things GOD has done already, whereat Millions of Saints have rejoiced, and do yet rejoice. Great Things GOD is doing *now*, but yet, my Brethren, we shall see greater Things than these. — *It is meet, right, and our bounden Duty, to give Thanks unto GOD, even the Father; for many righteous Men have desired to see the Things which we see, and have not seen them; and to hear the Things which we hear, and have not heard them.* — But still there are more excellent Things behind.—Glorious Things are spoken of these Times, *when the Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the LORD, as the Waters cover the Sea.* — There is a general Expectation among the People of GOD, when the Partition-Wall between *Jew* and *Gentile* shall be broken down, and all *Israel* be saved.—Happy those who live when GOD does this.—They shall see *Satan, like Lightning, fall from Heaven.*—They shall not weep, as the *Jews* did at the Building of the second Temple.—No, they shall rejoice with exceeding great Joy.—For all the former Glory of the Christian Church shall be nothing in Comparison of that Glory which shall excell. — Then shall they cry out with the Governor of the Feast, *Lord, thou hast kept thy good Wine until now!*

Fifthly and lastly, This shews forth to us the Happiness of that blessed State, when we shall all sit together at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and drink of the new Wine in his eternal and glorious Kingdom!

The

The Rewards which JESUS CHRIST confers on his faithful Servants, and the Comforts of his Love wherewith he comforts them, whilst Pilgrims here on Earth, are often so exceeding great, that were it not so promised, it were almost Presumption for them to hope for any Reward hereafter.—But, my Brethren, all the Manifestations of GOD that we can possibly be favoured with here, when compared with the Glory that is to be revealed in us, are no more than a Drop of Water when compared with an unbounded Ocean. Tho' CHRIST frequently fills his Saints even to the Brim, yet their corruptible Bodies weigh down their Souls, and cause them to cry, *Who shall deliver us from these Bodies of Death?*—These Earthly Tabernacles can hold no more:—But, blessed be GOD, these Earthly Tabernacles are to be dissolved;—this Corruptible is to put on Incorruption;—this Mortal is to put on Immortality, and when GOD shall cause all his Glory to pass before us, then shall we cry out, *LORD, thou hast kept thy good Wine until now.*—We have drunk deeply of thy Spirit; we have heard glorious Things spoken of this thy City, O GOD!—but we now find not the Half, not one Thousandth Part hath been told us.—Oh the invisible Realities of the World of Faith!—*Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of the greatest Saint to conceive how* CHRIST will shew forth his Glory there!—St. Paul, who was carried up into the third Heavens, could give us little or no Account of it.—And well he might not—for he heard and saw such Things as is not possible for a Man cloathed with Flesh and Blood to utter.—Whilst I am think-

thinking, and only speaking of those Things unto you, I am almost carried even beyond myself. — Methinks I now receive some little Foretastes of that new Wine which I hope to drink with you in the Heavenly Kingdom for ever and ever !

And wherefore do you think I have been saying these Things ? Many, perhaps, may be ready to say, To manifest thy own Vain-glory. — But it is a small Matter with me to be judged of Man's Judgment. — He that judgeth me is the LORD. — He knows that I have spoken of his Miracle only for the same End for which he at first perform'd it, and which I at first propos'd, that is, *to shew forth his Glory*, that you also may be brought to believe on him.

Did I come to preach myself, and not CHRIST JESUS my Lord, I would come to you, not in this Plainness of Speech, but with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom. Did I desire to please natural Men, I need not preach here in the Wilderness. — I hope my Heart aims at nothing else than what our LORD's great Fore-runner aim'd at, and which ought to be the Business of every Gospel Minister, that is, to point out to you the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. — *Behold* then, by Faith behold, *the Lamb of GOD, who taketh away the Sins of the World.* — Look unto him, and be saved. — You have heard how he was manifested, and will yet manifest his Glory to true Believers ; — and why then, O Sinners, will you not believe in him ? I say, O Sinners, for now I have spoken to the Saints, I have many Things to say to you. And Oh ! may God give you all an hearing Ear, and an obedient Heart !

My

xviii *The MARRIAGE of Cana.*

My LORD, even the Lord JESUS, who shewed forth his Glory above 1700 Years ago, has made a Marriage Feast, and offers to espouse all Sinners to himself, and to make them Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone. He is willing to be united to you by one Spirit. In every Age, at sundry Times, and after divers Manners, he hath sent forth his Servants, and they have bid many,—but yet, my Brethren, there is Room. The Lord therefore now has given a Commission in these last Days to other of his Servants, even to compel poor Sinners by the Cords of Love to come in.—For our Master's House must and shall be filled.—He will not shed his precious Blood in vain.—Come then, my Brethren, come to the Marriage.—Do not play the Harlot any longer.—Let this be the Day of your Espousals with JESUS CHRIST,—he only is your lawful Husband,—he is willing to receive you, tho' other Lords have had Dominion over you.—Come then to the Marriage.—Behold the Oxen and Fatlings are killed, and all Things are ready,—let me hear you say, as *Rebecca* did, when they asked her, whether she would go and be a Wife to *Isaac*; — Oh let me hear you say, We will come. — Indeed you will not repent it. — The Lord shall turn your Water into Wine.—He shall fill your Souls with Marrow and Fatness, and cause you to praise him with joyful Lips.—Do not say, you are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and therefore ashamed to come,—for it is to such that this Invitation is now sent.—The Polite, the Rich, the Busy, Self-righteous Pharisees of this Generation have been bidden already,—but they have rejected the Counsel of GOD against themselves. — They
are

are too deeply engaged in going, one to his Country House, another to his Merchandize. They are so deeply wedded to the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, that they, as it were with one Consent, have made Excuse. And tho' they have been often called in their own Synagogues, yet all the Return they make is to thrust us out, and thereby in Effect say, they will not come.— But GOD forbid, my Brethren, that you should learn of them; — no, since our Lord condescends to call first, (because if left to yourselves you would never call after him) let me beseech you to answer him, as he answered for you, when called upon by infinite offended Justice to die for your Sins,—that is, *Lo! I come to do thy Will, O GOD!* What if you are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, that is no Excuse;—Faith is the only Wedding Garment CHRIST requires; — he does not call you because you *are already*, but because he intends to *make you Saints*.—No, it pities him to see you naked.—He wants to cover you with his Righteousness.—In short, he desires to shew forth his Glory, that is, his free Love thro' your Faith in him.—Not but that he will be glorified, whether you believe in him or not; — for the infinitely free Love of JESUS CHRIST will be ever the same, whether you believe it, and *so* receive it, or not.—But our LORD will not send out his Servants in vain, to call you always.—The Time will come when he will say, None of those which were bidden, and would not come, shall taste of my Supper.—Our LORD is a GOD of Justice, as well as a GOD of Love; and if Sinners will not take hold of his Golden Sceptre, verily he will bruise them with his Iron Rod. It is for your Sakes, O Sinners, and not his own,
that

that he thus condescends to invite you. Oh suffer him then to shew forth his Glory, even the Glory of the exceeding Riches of his free Grace, by believing on him,—*For we are saved by Grace thro' Faith.*—It was Grace, free Grace, that moved the Father so to love the Word, as *to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life!*—It was Grace, that made the Son to come down and die.—It was Grace, free Grace, that moved the HOLY GHOST to undertake to sanctify the Elect People of GOD;—and it was Grace, free Grace, that moved our Lord JESUS CHRIST to send forth his Ministers to call all poor Sinners this Day. Let me not then, my Brethren, go without my Errand.—Why will you not believe in him? Will the Devil do such great and good Things for you as CHRIST will? No indeed, he will not.—Perhaps he may give you to drink at first of a little brutish Pleasure, — But what will he give you to drink at last? a Cup of Fury and of Trembling; a never-dying Worm, a self-condemning Conscience, and the bitter Pains of Eternal Death.—But as for the Servants of JESUS CHRIST, it is not so with them. No, he keeps his best Wine till the last.—And tho' he may cause you to drink of the Brook in the Way to Heaven, and of the Cup of Affliction, — yet he sweetens that with a Sense of his Goodness, and makes it pleasant Drink, such as their Souls do love. I appeal to the Experience of any Saint here present, (as I doubt not but there are many such in this Field) whether CHRIST has not proved faithful to his, ever since you have been espoused to him? Has he not shew'd forth his Glory ever since you have believed on him? And now, Sinners,

ners, what have you to object? I see you are all silent,—and well you may.—For if you will not be drawn by the Cords of Infinite and Everlasting Love, what will draw you? I could urge many Terrors of the LORD to persuade you; --- but if the Love of JESUS CHRIST will not constrain you, your Case is desperate. — Remember then this Day I have invited all, even the worst of Sinners, the most abandon'd Adulterers and Adultereesses, to be married to the Lord JESUS.— If you perish, remember you do not perish for Lack of Invitation. — You yourselves shall stand forth at the last Day, and I here give you a Summons to meet me at the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, and to clear both my Master and me. — Would Weeping, would Tears prevail on you, I could wish my Head Waters, and my Eyes Fountains of Tears, that I might weep out every Argument, and melt you into Love.— Would any Thing I could do or suffer influence your Hearts, I think I could bear to pluck out my Eyes, or even to lay down my Life for your Sakes. — Or was I sure to prevail on you by Importunity, I could continue my Discourse till Midnight, I would wrestle with you even till the Morning Watch, as *Jacob* did with the Angel, and would not go away till I had overcome.— But such Power belongeth only unto the LORD, — I can only invite; it is He only can work in you both to Will and to Do after his good Pleasure; — It is his Property to take away the Heart of Stone, and give you a Heart of Flesh; — It is his Spirit that must convince you of Unbelief, and of the everlasting Righteousness of his dear Son.— 'Tis He alone must give Faith to apply his Righteousness to your Hearts; — It is He alone can give you
a Wedding

Wedding Garment, and cause you to sit down and drink New Wine in his Kingdom.—Whatever others may boast of Man's Free-Will, I know of no Free-Will any one hath, except a Free-Will to do Evil continually.—As to Spirituals we are quite dead, and have no more Power to turn to GOD of ourselves, than *Lazarus* had to raise himself, after he had lain stinking in the Grave four Days.—If thou canst go, Oh Man, and breathe upon all the dry Bones that lye in the Graves, and bid them live;—if thou canst take thy Mantle and divide yonder River, as *Elijah* did the River *Jordan*; then will we believe thou hast a Power to turn to GOD of thyself:—But as thou must despair of the one, so thou must despair of the other, without CHRIST's preventing and quickening Grace;—In him is thy only Help;—Fly to him then by Faith;—Say unto him, as the poor Leper did, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make us willing*; and he will stretch forth the Right-hand of his Power to assist and relieve you:—He will sweetly guide you by his Wisdom on Earth, and afterwards take you up to partake of his Glory in Heaven.

To his Mercy therefore, and Almighty Protection, do I earnestly, humbly, and most affectionately commit you; the LORD bless you and keep you.—The LORD lift up the Light of his blessed Countenance upon you, and give you all Peace and Joy in Believing, now and for evermore.

S E R M O N II.

THANKFULNESS for MERCIES
received a *necessary Duty*.

PSALM cvii. 30, 31.

*Then are they glad because they are at Rest,
and so he bringeth them unto the Haven
where they would be.*

*O that Men would therefore praise the Lord
for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders
that he doeth for the Children of Men!*

NUMBERLESS Marks does Man bear in his Soul, that he is fallen and estranged from GOD; but no one gives a greater Proof of it, than that Backwardness, which every one finds within himself, to the Duty of Praise and Thank-giving.

When GOD placed the first Man in Paradise, his Soul, no doubt, was so filled with a Sense of the Riches of the Divine Love, that he was continually employing that *Breath of Life* the Almighty had not long before *breathed* into him, in blessing and magnifying that all-bountiful, all-

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gracious

xxiv *Thankfulness for Mercies received*

gracious GOD, in whom he lived, moved, and had his Being.

And the brightest Idea we can form of the Angelical Hierarchy above, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, is, that they are continually standing round the Throne of GOD, and cease not Day and Night, saying, *Worthy art thou, O Lamb, that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing*, Rev. v. 12.

That then which was Man's Perfection when Time first began, and will be his Employment when Death is swallowed up in Victory, and Time shall be no more, without Controversy, is part of our Perfection, and ought to be our frequent Exercise on Earth: And I doubt not but those blessed Spirits, who are sent forth to minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation, often stand astonished when they encamp around us, to find our Hearts so rarely enlarged, and our Mouths so seldom opened, to shew forth the loving Kindness of the LORD, or to speak of all his Praise.

Matter for Praise and Adoration can never be wanting to Creatures redeemed by the Blood of the SON of GOD; and who have such continual Scenes of his infinite Goodness presented to their View, that were their Souls duly affected with a Sense of his universal Love, they could not but be continually calling on Heaven and Earth, Men and Angels to join with them in praising and blessing that *high and lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity, who maketh his Sun to shine on the Evil and on the Good*, and daily pours down his Blessings on the whole Race of Mankind.

But

But few are arrived to such a Degree of Charity, as to rejoice with those that do rejoice, and to be as thankful for others Mercies as their own. This Part of Christian Perfection, though begun on Earth, will be consummated only in Heaven; where our Hearts will glow with such fervent Love towards God and one another, that every fresh Degree of Glory communicated to our Neighbour, will also communicate to us a fresh Degree of Thankfulness and Joy.

That which has a greater Tendency to excite the Generality of us fallen Men to Praise and Thanksgiving, is a Sense of God's private Mercies and particular Benefits bestowed upon ourselves. For as these come nearer our own Hearts, so they must be more affecting; and as they are peculiar Proofs, whereby we may know that God does in a more especial Manner favour us above others, so they cannot but sensibly touch us; and if our Hearts are not quite frozen, like Coals of a Refiner's Fire, must melt us down into Thankfulness and Love. It was a Consideration of the distinguishing Favours God had shewn to his chosen People *Israel*, and the frequent and remarkable Deliverances wrought by him in behalf of those who go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Business in great Waters, that made the holy Psalmist break out so frequently as he does in this Psalm, into this moving, pathetic Exclamation, *Oh that Men would therefore praise the LORD for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doeth for the Children of Men!*

His expressing himself in so passionate, fervent a Manner, implies both the Importance and Neglect of the Duty. As when *Moses* on another

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Occasion cries out, *Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would practically consider their latter End!* Deut. xxxii. 29.

I say, Importance and Neglect of the Duty; for out of those many thousands that receive Blessings from the LORD, how few give Thanks in Remembrance of his Holiness? The Account given us of the ungrateful Depers, is but too lively a Representation of the Ingratitude of Mankind in general; who like them, perhaps, when under any humbling Providence, can cry, *JESUS Master, have Mercy on us*, Luke xvii. 13. but when healed of their Sicknes, or delivered from their Distress, scarce one in ten can be found returning to give Thanks to GOD.

And yet as common as this Sin of Ingratitude is, there is nothing we ought more earnestly to pray against. For what is more absolutely condemned in holy Scripture than Ingratitude? Or what more peremptorily required than the contrary Temper? Thus says the Apostle, *Rejoice evermore, in every Thing give Thanks*, 1 Thes. v. 16—18. *Be careful for nothing: But in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto GOD*, Phil. iv. 6.

On the contrary, the Apostle mentions it as one of the highest Crimes of the Gentiles, that they were not thankful. *Neither were they thankful*, says he, Rom. i. 21. As also in another Place, he numbers the *Unthankful*, 2 Tim. iii. 2. amongst those *unboly*, profane Persons who are to have their Portion in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

As for our Sins, GOD puts them behind his Back; but his Mercies he will have acknowledged. There is *Virtue gone out of me*, says *JESUS CHRIST*, Luke viii. 46. And the Woman who was cured of her bloody Issue, must *confess* it: And we generally find, when GOD sent any remarkable Punishment upon any particular Person, he reminded him of the Favours he had received, as so many Aggravations of his Ingratitude. Thus when GOD was about to visit *Eli's* House, he thus expostulates with him by his Prophet; *Did I plainly appear unto the House of thy Fathers, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's House? And did I chuse him, out of all the Tribes of Israel, to be my Priest, to offer upon my Altar, to burn Incense, and to wear an Ephod before me? Wherefore kick ye at my Sacrifice, and at mine Offering which I have commanded in my Habitation, and honourest thy Sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the Offerings of Israel my People? Wherefore the Lord GOD of Israel saith, I said indeed, that thy House, and the House of thy Father should walk before me for ever, but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me, for them that honour me will I honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. ii. 27, 28, 29, 30.

It was this and such like Instances of GOD's Severity against the Unthankful, that inclined me to chuse the Words of the Text as the most proper Subject I could discourse on at this Time.

For these four Months, my good Friends, we have now been upon the Sea in this Ship, and have occupied our Business in the great Waters. At GOD Almighty's Word, we have seen the stormy Wind arise, which hath lifted up the Waves there-

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of. *We have been carried up to the Heaven and down again to the Deep, and some of our Souls melted away because of the Trouble; but I trust we cried earnestly unto the LORD, and he delivered us out of our Distress. For he made the Storm to cease; so that the Waves thereof were still. And now we are glad, because we are at Rest, for GOD hath brought us to the Haven where we would be. Oh that you would therefore praise the LORD for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he hath done for us, the unworthiest of the Sons of Men.*

Thus *Moses*, thus *Joshua* behaved. For when they were about to take their Leaves of the Children of *Israel*, they recounted to them what great Things GOD had done for them, as the best Arguments and Motives they could urge to engage them to Obedience. And how can I copy after better Examples? What fitter, what more noble Motives to Holiness and Purity of living can I lay before you than they did?

Indeed I cannot say, that we have seen a *Pillar of Cloud by Day*, or a *Pillar of Fire by Night*, going visibly before us to guide our Course; but this I can say, that the same GOD who was in that Pillar of a Cloud and Pillar of Fire, which departed not from the *Israelites*, and who has made the Sun to rule the Day, and the Moon to rule the Night, has by his good Providence directed us in our right Way, or else the Pilot had steered us in vain.

Neither can I say, that we have seen the *Sun stand still*, as the Children of *Israel* did in the Days of *Joshua*. But surely GOD, during part of our Voyage, has caused it to withhold some of that Heat, which it usually sends forth in these warmer

warmer Climates, or else it had not failed but some of you must have perished in the Sickneſs that has been, and does yet continue among us.

We have not ſeen the Waters ſtand purpoſely on an Heap, that we might paſs through, neither have we been purſued by *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt; and delivered out of their Hands; but we have been led through the Sea as through a Wilderneſs, and were once remarkably preſerved from being run down by another Ship; which had God permitted, the Waters in all Probability would immediately have overwhelmed us, and like *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt, we ſhould have ſunk as Stones into the Sea.

We may indeed, Atheiſt like, aſcribe all theſe Things to natural Cauſes, and ſay, Our own Skill and Foreſight has brought us hither in Safety. But as certainly as JESUS CHRIST, that Angel of the Covenant, in the Days of his Fleſh, walked upon the Water, and ſaid to his ſinking Diſciples, *Be not afraid, it is I*, ſo ſurely has the ſame everlaſting *I AM*, who decketh himſelf with *Light as with a Garment*, who ſpreadeth out the *Heavens like a Curtain*, who claſpeth the Winds in his Fiſt, who holdeth the Waters in the Hollow of his Hands, and guided the wiſe Men by a Star in the Eaſt; ſo ſurely, I ſay, has he ſpoken, and at his Command the Winds have blown us where we are now arrived. For his Providence ruleth all Things, *Winds and Storms obey his Word*; he ſaith to it at one Time go, and it goeth; at another, come, and it cometh, and at a third Time blow this Way, and it bloweth.

It is he, my Brethren, and not we ourſelves, that has of late ſent us ſuch proſperous Gales; and

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made us ride, as it were, on the Wings of the Wind; into the Haven where we would be.

Oh that you would therefore praise the LORD for his Goodness, and by your Lives declare, that you are truly thankful for the Wonders he hath shewn to us, who are less than the least of the Sons of Men.

I say, declare it by your Lives. For to give him Thanks barely with your Lips, while your Heart is far from him, is but a mock Sacrifice, nay, an Abomination unto the LORD.

This was the End, the Royal Psalmist says, GOD had in view, when he shewed such Wonders, from Time to Time to the People of *Israel*, *that they might keep his Statutes and observe his Laws*, Psal. cv. 44. and this, my good Friends, is the End GOD would have accomplished in us, and the only Return he desires us to make him, for all the Benefits he hath conferred upon us.

O then, let me beseech you, give GOD your Hearts, your whole Hearts; and suffer yourselves to be drawn by the Cords of infinite Love to honour and obey him.

Assure yourselves you never can serve a better Master; for his Service is perfect Freedom, his Yoak, when worn a little while, exceeding easy, his Burden light; and in keeping his Commandments there is great Reward, Love, Peace, Joy in the HOLY GHOST here, and a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away hereafter.

You may indeed let other Lords have Dominion over you, and Satan may promise to give you all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, if you will fall down and worship him; but he is a Liar, and was so from the Beginning;

ginning; and has not so much to give you, as you may tread on with the Sole of your Foot; or could he give you the whole World, yet that could not make you happy without GOD. It is GOD alone, my Brethren, whose we are, in whose Name I now speak, and who has of late shewed us such Mercies in the Deep, that can give solid lasting Happiness to your Souls; and he for this Reason only desires your Hearts, because without him they must be miserable.

Suffer me not then to go away without my Errand; as it is the last Time I shall speak to you, let me not speak in vain; but let a Sense of the Divine Goodness lead you to Repentance.

Even *Saul*, that abandoned Wretch, when *David* shewed him his Skirt, which he had cut off, when he might have taken his Life, was so melted down with his Kindness, that he lifted up his Voice and wept. And we must have Hearts harder than *Saul's*, nay harder than the nether Millstone, if a Sense of GOD's late loving Kindnesses, notwithstanding he might so often have destroyed us, does not even compel us to lay down our Arms against him, and become his faithful Servants and Soldiers unto our Lives End.

If they have not this Effect upon us, we shall of all Men be most miserable; for GOD is just, as well as merciful; and the more Blessings we have received here, the greater Damnation, if we do not improve them, shall we incur hereafter.

But GOD forbid that any of those should ever suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire, amongst whom I have for these four Months been preaching the Gospel of CHRIST, but yet thus must it be, if you do not improve the Divine Mercies;

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and instead of your being my Crown of Rejoicing in the Day of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, I must appear as a swift Witness against you.

But, Brethren, I am persuaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, though I thus speak.

Blessed be GOD, some Marks of a partial Reformation at least, have been visible amongst all you that are Soldiers. And my weak, though sincere Endeavours to build you up in the Knowledge and Fear of GOD, have not been altogether in vain in the LORD.

Swearing, I hope, is in a great measure abated with you; and GOD, I trust, has blessed his late Visitations, by making them the Means of awakening your Consciences, to a more solicitous Enquiry about the Things which belong to your everlasting Peace.

Fulfil you then my Joy, by continuing thus minded, and labour to go on to Perfection. For I shall have no greater Pleasure than to see, or hear, that you walk in the Truth.

Consider, my good Friends, you are now as it were entering on a new World, where you will be surrounded with Multitudes of Heathens; and if you take not heed to *have your Conversation honest amongst them, and to walk worthy the holy Vocation wherewith you are called*, you will act the hellish Part of *Herod's* Soldiers over again; and cause CHRIST's Religion, as they did his Person, to be had in Derision of those that are round about you.

Consider further, what peculiar Privileges you have enjoyed above many others that are entering on the same Land. They have had as it were a
Famine

Famine of the Word, but you have rather been in Danger of being surfeited with your spiritual Manna. And therefore as more Instructions have been given you, so from you Men will most justly expect the greater Improvement in Goodness.

Indeed I cannot say I have discharged my Duty towards you as I ought. No, I am sensible of many Faults which I have been guilty of in my ministerial Office, and for which I have not failed, nor, I hope, ever shall fail to humble myself in secret before GOD. However, this I can say, that except a few Days that have been spent necessarily on other Persons, whom GOD immediately called me to write and minister unto, and the two last Weeks wherein I have been confined by Sicknes; all the while I have been aboard, I have been either actually engaged in, or preparing myself for instructing you. And though you are now to be committed to the Care of another (whose Labours I heartily beseech GOD to bless amongst you) yet I trust I shall at all Seasons, if need be, willingly spend, and be spent, for the good of your Souls, though the more abundantly I love you the less I should be loved.

As for your military Affairs, I have nothing to do with them. Fear GOD, and you must honour the King. Nor am I better acquainted with the Nature of that Land which you are now come over to protect; only this I may venture to affirm in the general, that you must necessarily expect upon your Arrival at a new Colony, to meet with many Difficulties. But your very Profession teaches you to endure Hardship; be not therefore faint-hearted, but quit yourselves like Men, and be strong, *Numb, xiv.* Be not like those cowardly

LXXIV *Thankfulness for Mercies received*

ardly Persons, who were affrighted at the Report of the false Spies, that came and said, that there were People tall as the *Anakims* to be grappled with, but be ye like unto *Caleb* and *Joshua*, all Heart; and say, we will act valiantly, for we shall be more than Conquerors over all Difficulties through **JESUS CHRIST** that loved us.— Above all Things, my Brethren, take heed and beware of murmuring, like the perverse *Israelites*, against those that are set over you; and *learn whatsoever State you shall be in, therewith to be content*, Phil. iv. 11.

As I have spoken to you, I hope your Wives also will suffer the Word of Exhortation.

Your Behaviour on Shipboard, especially the first Part of the Voyage, I chuse to throw a Cloak over; for to use the mildest Terms, it was not such as *became the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST*. However of late, blessed be GOD, you have taken more heed to your Ways, and some of you have walked all the while, as became *Women professing Godliness*. Let those accept my hearty Thanks, and permit me to intreat you all in general, as you are all now married, to remember the solemn Vow you made at your Entrance into the Marriage State; and see that you be *subject to your own Husbands, in every lawful Thing*: Beg of GOD to *keep the Door of your Lips, that you offend not with your Tongues*; and *walk in Love, that your Prayers be not hindered*. You that have Children, let it be your chief Concern to *breed them up in the Nurture and Monition of the LORD*. And live all of you so holy and unblameable, that you may not so much as be suspected to be unchaste; and

as some of you have imitated *Mary Magdalene* in her Sin, strive to imitate her also in her Repentance.

As for you that are Sailors, what shall I say? How shall I address myself to you? How shall I do that which I so much long to do — touch your Hearts? Gratitude obliges me to wish thus well to you. For you have often taught me many instructive Lessons, and reminded me to put up many Prayers to GOD for you, that you might receive your spiritual Sight.

When I have seen you preparing for a Storm, and riefing your Sails to guard against it, how have I wished that you and I were both as careful to avoid that Storm of GOD's Wrath, which will certainly, without Repentance, quickly overtake us? When I have observed you catch at every fair Gale, how have I secretly cried, Oh that we were as careful to know the Things that belong to our Peace, before they are hid from our Eyes! And when I have taken Notice how steadily you eyed your Compass in order to steer aright, how have I wish'd, that we as steadily eyed the Word of GOD, which alone can preserve us from *making Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience?* In short, there is scarce any thing you do, which has not been a Lesson of Instruction to me; and therefore it would be ungrateful in me, did I not take this Opportunity of exhorting you in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to be as wise in the Things which concern your Soul, as I have observed you to be in the Affairs belonging to your Ship.

I am sensible that the Sea is reckoned but an ill school to learn CHRIST, in: And to see a devout Sailor

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Sailor is esteemed as uncommon a Thing, as to see a *Saul* amongst the Prophets. But whence this wondering? Whence this looking upon a godly Sailor as a Man to be wondered at, as a speckled Bird upon the Earth? I am sure for the little Time I have come in and out amongst you, and as far as I can judge from the little Experience I have had of Things; I scarce know any way of Life, that is capable of greater Improvements than yours.

The continual Danger you are in of being overwhelmed by the great Waters; the many Opportunities you have of beholding God's Wonders in the Deep; the happy Retirement you enjoy from worldly Temptations; and the daily Occasions that are offered you, to endure Hardships, are such noble Means of promoting the spiritual Life, that were your Hearts bent towards God, you would account it your Happiness, that his Providence has called you, to *go down to the Sea in Ships, and to occupy your Business in the great Waters.*

The royal Psalmist knew this, and therefore in the Words of the Text, calls more especially on Men of your Employ, to *praise the LORD for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders he doth for the Children of Men.*

And oh that you would be wise in time, and hearken to his Voice to Day, *whilst it is called to Day!* For ye yourselves know how little is to be done on a sick Bed: And how God has in an especial Manner of late invited you to Repentance. Two of your Crew he has taken off by Death, and most of you he has mercifully visited with a grievous Sicknes. The Terrors of the
LORD

LORD have been upon you, and when burnt with a scorching Fever, some of you have cried out, *What shall we do to be saved?* Remember then the Resolutions you made, when you thought GOD was about to take away your Souls. And see that according to your Promises, you shew forth your Thankfulness not only with your Lips but in your Lives. For though GOD may bear long, he will not forbear always; and if these signal Mercies and Judgments do not lead you to Repentance, assure yourselves there will at last come a fiery Tempest, from the Presence of the LORD, which will sweep away you, and all other Adversaries of GOD.

I am positive neither you nor the Soldiers have wanted, nor will want any manner of Encouragement to Piety and Holiness of living from those two Persons who have here the Government over you; for they have been such Helps to me in my Ministry, and have so readily concurred in every thing for your Good, that they may justly demand a publick Acknowledgment of Thanks both from you and me.

Permit me, my honoured Friends, in the Name of both your People, to return you hearty Thanks for the Care and Tenderness you have expressed for the Welfare of their better Parts.

As for the private Favours you have shewn my Person, I hope so deep a Sense of them is imprinted on my Heart, that I shall plead them before GOD in Prayer as long as I live.

But I have still stronger Obligations to intercede in your Behalf. For GOD, for ever adored be his free Grace in CHRIST JESUS, has set his Seal to my Ministry in your Hearts. Some distant

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stant Pangs of the New Birth I have observed to come upon you; and God forbid that I should sin against the LORD, by ceasing to pray, that the good Work begun in your Souls, may be carried on 'till the Day of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

The Time of our Departure from each other is now at hand, and you are going out into a World of Temptations. But though absent in Body, let us be present with each other in Spirit, and GOD, I trust, will enable you to be singularly good, to be ready to be accounted Fools for CHRIST's Sake; and then we shall meet never to part again in the Kingdom of our FATHER which is in Heaven.

To you my Companions and familiar Friends, who came over with me to sojourn in a strange Land, do I in the next Place address myself. For you I especially fear, as well as for myself; because as we take sweet Counsel together oftner than others, and as you are let into a more intimate Friendship with me in private Life, the Eyes of all Men will be upon you to note even the minuteft Miscarriage—and therefore it highly concerns you to *walk circumspectly* towards those that are without.—I hope nothing but a single Eye to GOD's Glory and the Salvation of your own Souls, brought you from your native Country. Remember then the End of your coming hither, and you can never do amiss.—Be Patterns of Industry, as well as Piety, to those who shall be around you; and above all Things, let us have such a fervent Charity amongst ourselves, that it may be said of us, as of the primitive Christians, See how the Christians love one another.

And

And now I have been speaking to others particularly, I have one general Request to make to all, and that with Reference to myself.

You have heard, my dear Friends, how I have been exhorting every one of you to shew forth your Thankfulness for the Divine Goodness, not only with your Lips, but in your Lives: But *Physician heal thyself*, may justly be retorted on me. For (without any false Pretences to Humility) I find my own Heart so little inclined to this Duty of Thanksgiving for the Benefits I have received, that I had need fear sharing *Hezekiah's* Fate, who because he was lifted up by, and not thankful enough for the great Things God had done for him, was given up a Prey to the Pride of his own Heart.

I need therefore, and beg your most importunate Petitions at the Throne of Grace, that no such Evil may befall me — that the more God exalts me the more I may debase myself — and that after I have preached to others, I myself may not be a Cast-away.

And now, Brethren, into God's Hands I commend your Spirits, who, I trust, through his infinite Mercies in CHRIST JESUS, will preserve you blameless, till his second Coming to judge the World.

Excuse my detaining you so long, it is the last Time I shall speak to you perhaps; my Heart is full, and out of the Abundance of it, I could continue my Discourse till Midnight — But I must away to your new World — may God give you new Hearts, and enable you to put in Practice what you have heard from Time to Time to be your Duty, and I need not wish you any thing better.

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better. For then GOD will so bless you, that you will build you Cities to dwell in; then will you sow your Lands and plant Vineyards, which will yield you Fruits of increase, Psal. cvii. 36, 37. Then your Oxen shall be strong to labour, there shall be no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in your Streets; then shall your Sons grow up as the young Plants, and your Daughters be as the polished Corners of the Temple: Then shall your Garners be full and plenteous with all manner of Store, and your Sheep bring forth Thousands and ten Thousands in your Streets, Psal. cxliv. In short, then shall the LORD be your GOD; and as surely as he has now brought us to this Haven, where we would be, so surely after we have pass'd through the Storms and Tempests of this troublesome World, will he bring us to the Haven of eternal Rest, where we shall have nothing to do, but to praise him for ever for his Goodness, and declare in never-ceasing Songs of Praise, the Wonders he has done for us, and all the other Sons of Men.

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To which blessed Rest, GOD of his infinite Mercy bring us all thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord, to whom with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen, Amen.

S E R M.

S E R M O N I.

On R E G E N E R A T I O N.

2 C O R. V. 17.

If any Man be in CHRIST, he is a new Creature.

THE Doctrine of our REGENERATION, or NEW BIRTH in CHRIST JESUS, tho' one of the most fundamental Doctrines of our Holy Religion; tho' so plainly and often pressed on us in sacred Writ, "that he that runs may read;" nay though it is the very Hinge on which the Salvation of each of us turns, and a Point too in which all *sincere* Christians, of whatever Denomination, agree; yet it is so seldom considered, and so little *experimentally* understood by the Generality of Professors, that were we to judge of the Truth of it by the *Experience* of most who call themselves *Christians*, we should be apt to imagine they had "not so much as heard" whether there be any such Thing as Regeneration or no. It is true, Men, for the most Part, are orthodox in the common Articles of their Creed; they believe there is but one GOD, and one Mediator

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between

between GOD and Man, even the Man CHRIST JESUS; and that there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby they can be saved, besides his: But then tell them, They must be REGENERATE, they must be BORN AGAIN, they must be renewed in the very *Spirit*, *i. e.* in the *inmost* Faculties of their Minds, e'er they can truly call CHRIST *Lord, Lord*, or have an Evidence that they have any Share in the Merits of his precious Blood; and they are ready to cry out with *Nicodemus*, "How can these Things be?" Or with the *Athenians*, on another Occasion, "What will this Babler say? He seemeth to be a Setter-forth of strange Doctrines; because we preach unto them CHRIST, and the New-Birth."

That I may therefore contribute my Mite towards curing the fatal Mistake of such Persons, who would thus put asunder what GOD has inseparably joined together, and vainly think they are justified by CHRIST, *i. e.* have their Sins forgiven, and his perfect Obedience imputed to them, when they are not also sanctified, *i. e.* have their Natures changed, and made holy, I shall beg leave to enlarge on the Words of the Text in the following Manner:

First, I shall endeavour to explain what is meant by *Being in CHRIST*, "If any Man be in CHRIST."

Secondly, What we are to understand by being a new Creature: "If any Man be in CHRIST, says the Apostle, he is a new Creature."

Thirdly, I shall produce some Arguments to make good the Apostle's Assertion.

Fourthly

Fourthly and Lastly, I shall draw some Inferences from what will have been delivered, and then conclude with a Word or two of Exhortation from the Whole.

And *first* then, I am to endeavour to explain what is meant by this Expression in the Text, *If any Man be in CHRIST*.

Now a Person may be said to be *in CHRIST* two Ways. First, only by an outward Profession. And in this Sense, every one that is called a Christian, or baptized into CHRIST's Church, may be said to be *in CHRIST*. But that this is not the sole Meaning of the Apostle's Phrase now before us, is evident, because then "every one that names the Name of CHRIST," or is baptized into his visible Church, would be a *new Creature*. Which is notoriously false, it being too plain, beyond all Contradiction, that comparatively but few of those that are "*born of Water*," are *born of the Spirit*" likewise; or, to use another Spiritual Way of speaking, Many are baptized with Water, which were never, effectually at least, baptized with the Holy Ghost.

To be *in CHRIST* therefore, in the full Import of the Word, must certainly mean something more than a bare outward Profession, or being called after his Name. For, as this same Apostle tells us, "All are not *Israelites* that are "*of Israel*," *i. e.* when applied to Christianity, all are not *real* Christians that are *nominally* such. Nay, that is so far from being the Case, that our Blessed LORD himself informs us, That many that have prophesied or preached in his Name, and in his Name cast out Devils, and done many

wonderful Works, shall notwithstanding be dismissed at the last Day, with “ Depart from me, “ I know you not, ye Workers of Iniquity.”

It remains therefore, that this Expression, *if any Man be in CHRIST*, must be understood in a second and closer Signification, *viz.* to be *in him* so as to partake of the Benefits of his Sufferings. To be *in him* not only by an outward Profession, but by an inward Change and Purity of Heart, and Cohabitation of his holy Spirit. To be *in him*, so as to be mystically united to him by a true and lively Faith, and thereby to receive spiritual Virtue from him, as the Members of the natural Body do from the Head, or the Branches from the Vine. To be *in him* in such a Manner as the Apostle, speaking of himself, acquaints us he knew a Person was, *I knew a Man in CHRIST*, says he, *i. e.* a true Christian; or, as he himself desires to be *in CHRIST*, when he wishes, in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, that he might be found *in him*.

This is undoubtedly the full Purport of the Apostle's Expressions in the Words of the Text; so that what he says in his Epistle to the *Romans* about Circumcision, may very well be applied to the present Subject, *viz.* That he is not a *real* Christian who is only one *outwardly*; nor is that true Baptism, which is only outward in the *Flesh*. But he is a true Christian, who is one *inwardly*, whose Baptism is that of the *Heart*, in the *Spirit*, and not merely in the *Water*, whose Praise is not of Man but of God. Or, as he speaketh in another Place, Neither Circumcision or Uncircumcision availeth any thing of itself, but a *new Creature*. Which amounts to what he here declares in the Verse now under Consideration, that

that if any Man be truly and properly in CHRIST, he is a *new Creature*.

What we are to understand by being a *New Creature*, was the next and *second* general Thing to be considered.

And here it is evident at the first View, that this Expression is not to be so explained as tho' there was a physical Change required to be made in us, *i. e.* as tho' we were to be reduced to our primitive *Nothings*, and then created and formed again. For, supposing we were, as *Nicodemus* ignorantly imagined, to enter a "second Time into our Mother's Womb, and be born," alas! what would it contribute towards rendring us spiritually *new Creatures*? Since that which was born of Flesh would be Flesh still, *i. e.* we should be the same carnal Persons as ever, being derived from carnal Parents, and consequently receiving the Seeds of all Manner of Sin and Corruption from them. No, it only means, that we must be so altered as to the Qualities and Tempers of our Minds, that we must entirely forget what manner of Persons we once were. As it may said of a Piece of Gold that was in the Ore, after it has been cleansed, purified and polished, that it is a new Piece of Gold; As it may be said of a bright Glass that has been covered over with Filth, when it is wiped, and so become transparent and clear, that it is a new Glass: Or, as it might be said of *Naaman*, when he recovered of his Leprosy, and his Flesh returned unto him like the Flesh of a young Child, that he was a new Man; so our Souls, tho' still the same as to Essence, yet are so purged,

purified and cleansed from their natural Dross, Filth and Leprosy, by the blessed Influences of the Holy Spirit, that they may be properly said to be *made anew*.

How this glorious Change is wrought in the Soul, cannot easily be explained. For no One knows the Ways of the Spirit, save the Spirit of GOD Himself. Not that this ought to be any Argument against this Doctrine; for, as our Blessed LORD observed to *Nicodemus*, when he was discoursing on this very Subject, *The Wind, says he, bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*; and if we are told of natural Things, and we understand them not, how much less ought we to wonder, if we cannot immediately account for the invisible Workings of the Holy Spirit? The Truth of the Matter is this: The Doctrine of our *Regeneration*, or *New Birth* in CHRIST JESUS, is “dark and hard to be understood” by the natural Man. But that there is really such a Thing, and that each of us must be spiritually born again I shall endeavour to shew under my

Third general Head, in which I was to produce some Arguments to make good the Apostle's Assertion.

And here one would think it sufficient to affirm, that GOD himself, in his holy Word, hath told us so. For, not to mention many Texts that might be produced out of the *Old Testament* to prove this Point, (and indeed, by the way, one would wonder how *Nicodemus*, who was a *Teacher in Israel*, and who was
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therefore to instruct the People in the spiritual Meaning of the Law, should be so ignorant of this grand Article, as we find he really was, by his asking our blessed LORD, when he was pressing on him this Topic, “How can these Things be?” Surely, he could not forget how often the Psalmist had begg’d of GOD, to make him a *new Heart*, and *renew a right Spirit* within him ; as likewise, how frequently the Prophets had warned the People to make them *new Hearts*, and *new Minds*, and so turn unto the LORD their GOD. But not to mention these and such like Texts out of the *Old Testament*, this Doctrine is so plainly and often repeated in the *New*, that, as I observed before, “He that runs may read.” For what says the great Prophet and Instructor of the World himself: *Except a Man (i. e. every one that is naturally engendred of the Offspring of Adam) be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD.* And lest we should be apt to slight this Assertion, and *Nicodemus-like*, reject the Doctrine, because we cannot immediately explain, How this Thing can be ; our blessed Master therefore affirms it, as it were, by an Oath, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, or, as it may be read, *I the Amen ; I, who am Truth itself, say unto you*, that it is the unalterable Appointment of my heavenly Father, *that unless a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD.*

Agreeable to this are those many Passages we meet with in the Epistles, where we are commanded to be *renewed in the Spirit, i. e.* as was before explained, in the inmost Faculties of our Minds ; to put off the *Old Man*, which is cor-

rupt; and to put on the *New Man*, which is created after GOD, in Righteousness and true Holiness; That *Old Things* must pass away, and that all Things must become *New*; That we are to be saved by the *Washing of Regeneration*, and the *Renewing of the HOLY GHOST*. Or, methinks, was there no other Passage to be produced besides the Words of the Text, it would be full enough, since the Apostle therein positively affirms, that *If any Man be in CHRIST, he is a new Creature*.

Now what can be understood by all these different Terms of being *born again*, of *putting off the Old Man*, and *putting on the New*, of being *renewed in the Spirit of our Minds*, and becoming *new Creatures*; but that Christianity requires a *thorough, real inward Change of Heart*? Do we think these, and such-like Forms of speaking, are mere Metaphors, Words of a bare Sound, without any real solid Signification? Indeed, it is to be feared, some Men would have them interpreted so; but alas! unhappy Men! they are not to be envied their Metaphorical Interpretation: It will be well, if they do not interpret themselves out of their Salvation.

Multitudes of other Texts might be produced to confirm this same Truth; but those already quoted are so plain and convincing, that one would imagine no one should deny it; were we not told, “ There are some, who having Eyes,
 “ see not, and Ears, hear not, and that will not
 “ understand with their Hearts, or hear with
 “ their Ears, lest they should be converted, and
 “ CHRIST should heal them.

But

But I proceed to a second Argument; and that shall be taken from the Purity of GOD, and the present corrupt and polluted State of Man.

Now GOD is described in Holy Scripture (and I speak to those who profess to know the Scripture) as a *Spirit*; as a Being of such infinite Sanctity, as to be of *purser Eyes* than to *behold Iniquity*; as to be so transcendently *Holy*, that it is said the *very Heavens are not clean in his Sight*; and the *Angels themselves* he chargeth with *Folly*. On the other Hand, Man is described (and every regenerate Person will find it true by his own Experience) as a Creature altogether *conceived and born in Sin*; as having no *good Thing* dwelling in him; as being *carnal, sold under Sin*; nay, as having a Mind which is at *Enmity with GOD*, and such like. And since then there is such an infinite Disparity, can any one conceive how such a filthy, corrupted, polluted Wretch can dwell with an infinitely pure and holy GOD, before he is changed, and rendered, in some Measure, like him? Can He, that is of purer Eyes than to *behold Iniquity, dwell with it*? Can He, in whose Sight the *Heavens* are not clean, delight to dwell with *Uncleanness* itself? No, we might as well suppose *Light* to have Communion with *Darkness*, or CHRIST to have Concord with *Belial*. But I pass on to a

Third Argument, which shall be founded on the Consideration of the Nature of that Happiness GOD has prepared for those that unfeignedly love him.

To enter indeed on a minute and particular Description of Heaven, would be vain and pre-

sumptuous, since we are told that *Eye* hath not *seen*, nor *Ear* heard, neither hath it entered into the *Heart of Man* to *conceive*, the Things that are there prepared for the *sincere Followers* of the Holy JESUS, even in this Life, much less in that which is to come. However, this we may venture to affirm in the general, that as GOD is a *Spirit*, so the Happiness he has laid up for his People is *spiritual* likewise; and consequently, unless our *carnal Minds* are *changed*, and *spiritualized*, we can never be made meet to partake of that Inheritance with the Saints in Light.

It is true, we may flatter ourselves, that, supposing we continue in our natural corrupt Estate, and carry all our Lusts along with us, we should, notwithstanding, *relish* Heaven, was GOD to admit us therein. ~~But~~ *Heaven*, was it a *Mahometan Paradise*, wherein we were to take our full Swing in sensual Delights: But since its Joys are only *spiritual*, and no unclean Thing can possibly enter those blessed Mansions, there is an absolute Necessity of our being *changed*, and undergoing a total *Renovation* of our depraved Natures, before we can have any Taste or Relish of those heavenly Pleasures.

It is, doubtless, for this Reason, that the Apostle declares it to be the irrevocable Decree of the Almighty, that *without Holiness*, i. e. without being made pure by *Regeneration*, and having the Image of GOD thereby reinstamped upon the Soul, *no Man living shall see the LORD*. And it is very observable, that our Divine Master, in the famous Passage before referred to, concerning the absolute Necessity of *Regeneration*, does not say, *Unless a Man be born again, he SHALL NOT*, but *Unless a Man be born again, be*

he CANNOT enter into the Kingdom of GOD. For it is founded in the very Nature of Things, that unless we have Dispositions wrought in us suitable and answerable to the Objects that are to entertain us, we can take no Manner of Complacency or Satisfaction in them. For Instance; What Delight can the most harmonious *Musick* afford a *deaf*, or what Pleasure the most excellent *Picture* give a *blind* Man? Can a tasteless Palate relish the richest Dainties, or a filthy Swine be pleased with the finest Garden of Flowers? No: And what Reason can be assigned for it? An Answer is ready; Because they have neither of them any Tempers of Mind correspondent or agreeable to what they are to be diverted with. And thus it is with the Soul hereafter. For Death makes no more Alteration in the Soul, than as it enlarges its Faculties, and makes it capable of receiving deeper Impressions either of Pleasure or Pain. If it delighted to converse with GOD here, it will be transported with the Sight of his glorious Majesty hereafter. If it was pleased with the Communion of Saints on Earth, it will be infinitely more so with the Communion and Society of holy Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect in Heaven. But if the Opposite of all this be true, we may assure ourselves it could not be happy, was GOD himself to admit it (which he never will do) into the Regions of the Blessed. But it is Time for me to hasten to the

Fourth and last Argument, viz. because CHRIST's Redemption will not be complete in us, unless we are *new Creatures*.

If we reflect indeed on the first and chief End of our blessed LORD's Coming, we shall find

it was to save us from our Sins, to be a Propitiation for our Sins, to give his Life a Ransom for many. But then, if the Benefits of our Dear Redeemer's Death were to extend no further than barely to procure Forgiveness of our Sins, we should have as little Reason to rejoice in it, as a poor condemned Criminal that is ready to perish by some fatal Disease, would have in receiving a Pardon from his Judge. For Christians would do well to consider, that there is not only a legal Hindrance to our Happiness, as we are Breakers of GOD's Law, but also a moral Impurity in our Natures, which renders us incapable of enjoying Heaven (as hath been already prov'd) till some mighty Change hath been wrought in us. It is necessary therefore, in order to make *Christ's* Redemption compleat, that we should have a Grant of GOD's Holy Spirit to change our Natures, and so prepare us for the Enjoyment of that Happiness our Saviour has purchased by his precious Blood.

Accordingly the holy Scriptures inform us, that whom CHRIST *justifies*, *i. e.* (as we said before) whose Sins he *forgives*, and to whom he imputes his perfect Obedience, those he also *sanctifies*, *i. e.* purifies and cleanses, and totally changeth their corrupted Natures. As the Scripture also speaketh in another Place, *CHRIST is to us Justification, Sanctification and then Redemption.*

Proceed we now to the next general Thing proposed, *viz.* To draw some Inferences from what has been delivered.

And

And *First* then, if he that is in CHRIST be a *new Creature*, this may serve as a Reproof for some, who rest in a bare Performance of *outward* Duties, without perceiving any real *inward* Change of Heart.

We may observe a great many Persons to be very punctual in the regular Returns of public and private Prayer, as likewise of receiving the Holy Communion, and perhaps, now and then too in keeping a Fast. But then here is the Misfortune, they rest barely in the Use of the Means, and think all is over, when they have just complied with these sacred Institutions; Whereas, were they rightly informed, they would consider, that all the instituted *Means* of Grace, as Prayer, Fasting, Hearing and Reading the Word of GOD, Receiving the blessed Sacrament, and such like, are no further serviceable to us, than as they are found to make us *inwardly* better, and to carry on the spiritual Life in the Soul.

It is true they are *Means*; but then they are *only* Means, they are *Part*, but not the *Whole* of Religion: For if so, Who more religious than the *Pharisee*? who fasted twice in the Week, and gave Tythes of all that he possessed, and yet was not justified, as our Saviour himself informs us, in the Sight of GOD.

You perhaps, like the *Pharisee*, may fast often, and make long Prayers; you may, with *Herod*, hear good Sermons gladly. But yet, if you continue vain and trifling, immoral or worldly-minded in your Conversations, and differ from the rest of your Neighbours barely in going to Church, or in complying with some outward Performances, are you better than they? No,
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in no wise ; you are by far much worse : For if you use them, and at the same Time abuse them, you thereby encourage others to think there is nothing in them, and therefore must expect to *receive the greater Damnation.*

But, *Secondly*, If he that is in CHRIST be a *new Creature*, then this may check the groundless Presumption of another Class of Professors, who rest in the Attainment of some Moral Virtues, and falsely imagine they are good Christians, if they are just in their Dealings, are temperate in their Diet, and do hurt or Violence to no Man.

But if this was all that is requisite to make us Christians, Why might not the Heathens of old be good Christians, who were remarkable for these Virtues ? Or St. Paul, before his Conversion, who tells us, That then he lived in all good Conscience, and was, touching the Law, blameless ; and yet, after his Conversion, we find he renounces all Dependence on Works of this Nature, and only desires to be found in CHRIST, and to know the Power of his Resurrection, *i. e.* to have an experimental Proof of receiving the HOLY GHOST, purchased for him by the *Death*, and ensured and applied to him by the *Resurrection* of JESUS CHRIST.

The Sum of the Matter is this : Christianity includes Morality, as Grace does Reason ; but if we are only mere *Moralists*, if we are not *inwardly* wrought upon, and changed by the powerful Operations of the *Holy Spirit*, and our Moral Actions, proceed from a Principle of a *new Nature*, however we may call ourselves Christians, we shall be found naked at the Great Day, and in the Number of those, who have
neither

neither Christ's Righteousness imputed to them for their Justification in the Sight, nor Holiness enough in their Souls as the Consequence of that, in order to make them *meet* for the Enjoyment of God.

Nor, *Thirdly*, will this Doctrine less condemn those, who rest in a partial Amendment of themselves, without experiencing a thorough, real, inward Change of Heart.

A little Acquaintance with the World will furnish us with Instances of no small Number of Persons, who, perhaps, were before openly profane; but seeing the ill Consequences of their Vice, and the many worldly Inconveniencies it has reduced them to, on a sudden, as it were, grow civilized: and thereupon flatter themselves that they are very religious, because they differ a little from their former Selves, and are not so scandalously wicked as once they were: Whereas at the same Time they shall have some secret darling Sin or other, some beloved *Dalilah* or *Herodias*, which they will not part with; some hidden Lust, which they will not mortify; some vicious Habit, which they will not take Pains to root out. But wouldst thou know, O vain Man! whoever thou art, what the *Lord thy God* requires of thee, thou must be inform'd, that nothing short of a *thorough sound* Conversion will fit thee for the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not enough to turn from *Profaneness* to *Civility*; but thou must turn from *Civility* to *Godliness*. Not only *some*, but *all Things* must become new in thy Soul. It will profit thee but little to do many Things, if yet some *one Thing* thou lackest. In short, thou must not only be an *almost*,
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but *altogether* a new Creature, or in vain thou boasteth that thou art a Christian.

Fourthly and *Lastly*. If he that is in *CHRIST* be a new Creature, then this may be prescribed as an infallible Rule for every Person of whatever Denomination, Age, Degree or Quality, to judge himself by; this being the only solid Foundation, whereon we can build a well-grounded Assurance of Pardon, Peace and Happiness.

We may indeed depend on the broken Reed of an external Profession; we may think we are good enough, if we lead such sober, honest, moral Lives, as many Heathens did. We may imagine we are in a safe Condition, if we attend on the public Offices of Religion, and are constant in the Duties of our Closets. But unless all these tend to reform our Lives, and change our Hearts, and are only used as so many Channels of Divine Grace; as I told you before, so I tell you again, Christianity will profit you nothing.

Let each of us therefore seriously put this Question to our Hearts: Have we received the HOLY GHOST since we believed? Are we *new Creatures* in *CHRIST*, or no? At least, if we are not so yet, is it our daily Endeavour to *become* such? Do we make a constant and conscientious Use of all the Means of Grace required thereto? Do we fast, watch and pray? Do we not only lazily seek, but laboriously strive to enter in at the strait Gate? In short, do we *renounce* our own Righteousness, take up our Crosses and follow *CHRIST*? If so, we are in that narrow Way which leads to Life. The good Seed is sown in our Hearts, and will, if duly

water'd and nourished by a regular persevering Use of *all* the Means of Grace, grow up to eternal Life. But on the contrary, if we have only *heard*, and know not *experimentally*, whether there be any HOLY GHOST; if we are Strangers to fasting, Watching and Prayer, and all the other spiritual Exercises of Devotion; if we are content to go in the broad Way, merely because we see most other People do so, without once reflecting whether it be the right one or not; in short, if we are Strangers, nay Enemies to the Crofs of CHRIST, by leading Lives of Softness, Worldly-mindedness, and sensual Pleasure, and thereby make others think, that Christianity is but an empty Name, a bare formal Profession; if this be the Case, I say, then CHRIST is as yet dead in vain as to *us*; we are yet under the Guilt of our Sins; and are unacquainted with a true and thorough Conversion.

But *Beloved*, I am persuaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, tho' we thus speak; I would humbly hope that you are sincerely persuaded, that he that hath not the Spirit of CHRIST is none of his; and that, unless the *Spirit*, which raised JESUS from the Dead, dwell in you here, neither will your mortal Bodies be quickned by the same *Spirit* to dwell with him hereafter.

Let me therefore (as was proposed in the last Place) earnestly exhort you, in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to act suitable to those Convictions, and to live as *Christians*, that are *commanded* in *Holy Writ*, to put off their former Conversation concerning the *Old Man*, and to put on the *New Man*, which is created after GOD in Righteousness and true Holiness.

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It must be owned indeed, that this is a great and difficult Work; but blessed be GOD, it is not impossible. Many Thousand of happy Souls have been assisted by a Divine Power to bring it about, and *why* should *We* despair of Success? Is GOD's Hand shortened, that it cannot save? Was He the GOD of our *Fathers*, is He not the GOD of their *Children* also? Yes, doubtless, of their *Children* also. It is a Task likewise that will put us to some Pain; it will oblige us to part with some Lust, to break with some Friend, to mortify some beloved Passion, which may be exceeding dear to us, and perhaps as hard to leave, as to cut off a *right Hand*, or pluck out a *right Eye*. But what of all this? Will not the being made a real living Member of CHRIST, a Child of GOD, and an Inheritor of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, abundantly make Amends for all this Trouble? Undoubtedly it will. *Lastly*, Setting about and carrying on this great and necessary Work, perhaps may, nay assuredly will expose us to the Ridicule of the unthinking part of Mankind, who will wonder, that we run not into the same Excess of Riot with themselves; and because we *may deny* our sinful Appetites, and are not conformed to this World, being commanded in Scripture to do the one, and to have our Conversation in Heaven in Opposition to the other, they *may* count our Lives Folly, and our End to be without Honour. But will not the being numbered among the Saints, and shining as the Stars for ever and ever, be a more than sufficient Recompense for all the Ridicule, Calumny, or Reproach, we can possibly meet with here?

Indeed, was there no other Reward attended
a thorough

a thorough Conversion, but that Peace of GOD, which is the unavoidable Consequence of it, and which, even in this Life, *passeth all Understanding*, we should have great Reason to rejoice. But when we consider this is the least of those Mercies GOD has prepared for those that are in CHRIST, *new Creatures*; that this is but the Beginning of an eternal Succession of Pleasures; that the Day of our Deaths, which the unconverted, unrenewed Sinner must so much dread, will be, as it were, but the *first Day* of our *new Births*, and open to us an everlasting Scene of Happiness and Comfort; in short, if we remember, that *they* who are regenerate and born again, have a real Title to all the glorious Promises of the Gospel, and are infallibly certain of being as happy, both here and hereafter, as an *All-wise, All-gracious, All-powerful GOD* can make them; methinks, every one that has but the least Concern for the Salvation of his precious, his immortal Soul, having such Promises, such an Hope, such an Eternity of Happiness set before him, should never cease watching, praying, and striving, till he find a real, inward, saving Change wrought in his Heart, and thereby knoweth of a Truth, that he dwells in CHRIST, and CHRIST in him; that he is a *new Creature in CHRIST*; that he is therefore a Child of GOD; that he is *already* an Inheritor, and will *e'er long* be an actual Possessor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant,
through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

To whom, &c.

S E R.

S E R M O N II.

Of Justification by CHRIST.

I COR. vi. 1-11.

But ye are justified.—

The whole Verse runs thus :—*And such were some of you ; but you are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and by the Spirit of our God.*

IT has been objected by some, who dissent from, nay, I may add, by others also, who actually are Friends to the present Ecclesiastical Establishment, that the Ministers of the Church of *England* preach themselves, and not JESUS CHRIST our Lord ; and entertain their People with Lectures of meer Morality, without declaring to them the glad Tidings of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST. How well grounded such an Opinion may be, is not my Business to enquire.—All I shall say at present to the Point is this, *viz.* That whenever such a grand Objection is urged against the whole Body of the Clergy in general, every honest Minister of JESUS CHRIST should

should do his utmost to cut off all manner of Occasion from those that desire an Occasion to take Offence at us ; that so by hearing us continually sounding forth the Word of Truth, and declaring with all Boldness and Assurance of Faith, that there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby they can be saved, but that of *JESUS CHRIST* ; they may be ashamed of this their confident, tho' perhaps too well grounded, Boasting against us.

It was an Eye to this Objection, joined with the Agreeableness and Delightfulness of the Subject (for who can but desire to talk of that which the Angels desire to look into?) that induced me to discourse a little on that great and fundamental Article of our Faith, *viz.* our being freely justified by the precious Obedience and Death of *JESUS CHRIST*. *But ye are washed,* says the Apostle, *but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and by the Spirit of our GOD.*

The Words beginning with the Particle *But* have plainly a Reference to something that went before ; it may not therefore be improper, before I descend to Particulars, to consider the Words as they stand in relation to the Context. The Apostle, in the Verses immediately foregoing, had been reckoning up many notorious Sins, Drunkenness, Adultery, Fornication, and such like, the Commission of which, without a true and hearty Repentance, he tells the *Corinthians*, would entirely shut them out of the Kingdom of God. But then, lest they should either, on the one Hand, grow spiritually proud by seeing themselves differ from their unconverted Brethren, and therefore be tempted to set them at nought,
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and say with the self-conceited Hypocrite in the Prophet, *Come not nigh me, for I am holier than thou*: Or, on the other Hand, by looking back on the Multitude of their past Offences, should be apt to think their Sins were too many and grievous to be forgiven: He first, in order to keep them humble, reminds them of their sad Estates before Conversion, telling them in plain Terms, Such (or as is it might be read, *these Things*) were some of you; not only one, but all that sad Catalogue of Vices I have been drawing up, some of you were once guilty of; but then, at the same Time, to preserve them from Despair, behold he brings them glad Tidings of great Joy: *But ye are washed; but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and by the Spirit of our GOD*.

The former Part of this Text, *viz.* our being *Sanctified*, I did, in some measure, treat of, when I discoursed on *the Nature and Necessity of the New Birth*: I come now to enlarge on the latter Part, *viz.* our being freely *Justified* by the precious Obedience and Death of JESUS CHRIST: *But ye are justified in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST*.

From which Words I shall consider three Things:

First, What is meant by the Word *Justified*.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to prove that all Mankind in general, and every individual Person in particular, stands in Need of being *justified*.

Thirdly and lastly, That there is no Possibility of obtaining this Justification, which we
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so much want, but by the all-perfect Obedience, and precious Death of *JESUS CHRIST*.

First then, I am to consider what is meant by the Word *Justified*.

But *ye are justified*, says the Apostle; which is all the same, as tho' he had said, You have your Sins forgiven, and are looked upon by God as though you never had offended him at all: For that is the Meaning of the Word *justified*, in almost all the Passages of Holy Scripture where this Word is mentioned. Thus, when this same Apostle writes to the *Romans*, he tells them, that whom GOD called, those he also *justified*: And that this Word *justified* implies a total Blotting out of all our Transgressions, is manifest from what follows, *them he also glorified*, which could not be if a justified Person was not looked upon by God, as tho' he never had offended him at all. And again, speaking of *Abraham's Faith*, he tells them, that *Abraham believed on Him that justifies the Ungodly, i. e.* who acquits and clears the ungodly Man; for it is a Law-term, and alludes to a Judge acquitting an accused Criminal of the Thing laid to his Charge. Which Expression the Apostle himself explains by a Quotation out of the *Psalms*: *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth no Sin*. From all which Proofs, and many others that might be urged, it is evident, that by being justified, we are to understand, being so acquitted in the Sight of GOD as to be looked upon as tho' we never had offended him at all. And in that Sense we are to understand that Article which we profess to believe

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believe when we just now repeated our Creed, and each of us declared in his own Person, *I believe the Forgiveness of Sins.*

Which leads me directly to the Second Thing proposed, namely, to prove that all Mankind in general, and every individual Person in particular, stands in Need of being justified.

And indeed the Apostle supposes this in the Words of the Text: *But ye are justified*, says he, thereby implying that the *Corinthians* (and consequently all Mankind, there being no Difference, as will be shewn hereafter) stood in Need of being justified.

But not to rest in bare Suppositions, in my further Enlargement on this second general Head, I shall endeavour to prove, that we all stand in Need of being justified on Account of the Sin of our Natures; secondly, the Sin of our Lives.

And first, I affirm that we all stand in Need of being justified, on Account of the Sin of our Natures: For we are all chargeable with Original Sin, or the Sin of our First Parents—Which, tho' a Proposition that may be denied by a self-justifying Infidel, who *will not come to Christ that he may have Life*; yet can never be denied by any one who believes that *St. Paul's Epistles* were written by divine Inspiration; where we are told, that *in Adam all died*; that is, *Adam's Sin* was imputed to all: And lest we should forget to make a particular Application, it is further added in another Place, that there is none that doeth Good (that is, by Nature) no; not one: That we are all gone out of the Way, *viz.* of original Righteousness, and are by Na-
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ture the Children of Wrath. And even *David*, who was a Man after God's own Heart, and, if any one could, might surely plead an Exemption from this universal Corruption, yet he confesses, that *he was shapen in Iniquity, and that in Sin did his Mother conceive him.* And, to mention but one Text more, as immediately applicable to the present Purpose, *St. Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, says, that *Death came upon all Men, for the Disobedience of one Man, namely, of Adam, even upon those*, says he, (that is, little Children) *who had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression*; or, had not been guilty of actual Sin, and therefore could not be punished with temporal Death (which came into the World, as this same Apostle elsewhere informs us, only by Sin) had not the Disobedience of our first Parents been imputed to them. So that what has been said in this Point seems to be excellently summed up in that Article of our Church, where she declares, that "Original Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, but it is the Fault and Corruption of every Man, that naturally is engendered of the Offspring of *Adam*; whereby Man is very far gone from Original Righteousness, and is of his own Nature inclined to Evil, so that the Flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every Person born into this World, it deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation."

I have been the more particular in treating of this Point, because it is the very Foundation of the Christian Religion: For I am verily persuaded, that it is nothing but a Want of being well grounded in the Doctrine of Original Sin, and

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of the helpless, nay, I may say, damnable Condition each of us comes into the World in, that makes so many Infidels oppose, and so many that call themselves Christians, so very lukewarm in their Love and Affections to JESUS CHRIST. It is this, and I could almost say, this only that makes Infidelity abound amongst us so much as it does. For alas! We are mistaken if we imagine that Men *now* commence or continue Infidels, and set up corrupted Reason in Opposition to divine Revelation merely for Want of Evidence, (for I believe it might easily be proved, that a modern Unbeliever is the most credulous Creature living;) No, it is only for Want of an humble Mind, of a Sense of their Original Depravity, and a Willingness to own themselves so depraved, that makes them so obstinately shut their Eyes against the Light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST. Whereas, on the contrary, were they but once pricked to the Heart with a due and lively Sense of their natural Corruption and Liableness to Condemnation, we should have them no more scoffing at divine Revelation, and looking on it as an idle Tale; but they would cry out with the trembling Jaylor, *What shall I do to be saved?* It was an Error in this fundamental Point, that made so many resist the Evidence the Son of GOD himself gave of his divine Mission, when he tabernacled amongst us. Every Word he spake, every Action he did, every Miracle he wrought, proved that he came from GOD. And why then did so many harden their Hearts, and would not believe his Report? Why, He himself informs us, *They will not come unto me that they may have Life:* They will obstinately

stinately stand out against those Means GOD had appointed for their Salvation: And St. Paul tells us, that *if the Gospel be hid, it is to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Eyes of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, who is the Image of GOD, should shine upon them.* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But to return from this Digression, which I could not very well avoid making; if it be asked, How it suits with the divine Goodness, to impute the Guilt of one Man's Sin, to an innocent Posterity? I should think it sufficient to make use of the Apostle's Words: *Nay, but O Man, Who art thou that repliest against GOD? Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* But to come to a more direct Reply: Persons would do well to consider that in this first Covenant GOD made with Man, Adam acted as a public Person, as the common Representative of all Mankind, and consequently we must stand or fall with him. Had he continued in his Obedience, and not eaten the forbidden Fruit, the Benefits of that Obedience would doubtless have been imputed to us: But since he did not persist in it, but broke the Covenant made with him, and us in him; who dares charge the righteous Judge of all the Earth with Injustice for imputing that to us also?

II. But I proceed *Secondly* to prove that we stand in Need of being *justified*, on Account of the Sin of our Lives.

That GOD, as he made Man, has a Right to demand his Obedience, I suppose, is a Truth no one will deny: That he hath also given us both a natural and a written Law, whereby we are to be judged, cannot be questioned by any one who believes St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans* to be of divine Authority: For in this we are told of a Law written in the Heart, and a Law given by *Moses*; and that each of us hath broken these Laws, is too evident from our sad and frequent Experience. Accordingly the holy Scriptures informs us that *there is no Man which liveth and sinneth not*; that *in many Things we offend all*; that *if we say we have no Sin we deceive ourselves*, and such like. And if we are thus Offenders against GOD, it follows that we stand in Need of Forgiveness for thus offending Him; unless we suppose GOD should enact Laws, and at the same Time not care whether they are obeyed or no; which is as absurd as to suppose that a Prince should establish Laws for the proper Government of his Country, and yet let every Violator of them come off with Impunity. But GOD has not dealt so foolishly with his Creatures: No, as he gave us a Law, he demands our Obedience to that Law, and has obliged us universally and perseveringly to obey it, under no less a Penalty than incurring his Curse and eternal Death for every Breach of it: For thus speaks the Scripture: *Cursed is he that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Law to do them*; as the Scripture also speaketh in another Place, *The Soul that sinneth, it shall die*. Now it has already been proved, that
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we have all of us sinned ; and therefore, unless some Means can be found to satisfy GOD's Justice, we must perish eternally.

Let us here then stand a while, and see in what a deplorable Condition each of us comes into the World, and still continues, till we are put into a State of Grace. For surely nothing can well be supposed more deplorable than to be born under the Curse of GOD ; to be charged with *Original Guilt* ; and not only so, but to be convicted as actual Breakers of GOD's Law, the least Breach of which justly deserves eternal Damnation. Surely this can be but a melancholy Prospect to view ourselves in, and must put us upon contriving some Means whereby we may satisfy and appease our offended Judge. But what must those Means be ? Shall we repent ? Alas ! there is not one Word of Repentance mentioned in the first Covenant : *The Day that thou eatest thereof*, says GOD, *thou shalt surely die*. So that, if GOD be true, unless there be some Way found out to satisfy divine Justice, we must perish ; and there is no Room left for us to expect a Change of Mind in GOD, though we should seek it with Tears. Well then, if Repentance will not do, shall we plead the Law of Works ? Alas ! *By the Law shall no Man living be justified : For by the Law comes the Knowledge of Sin*. It is that which convicts and condemns, and therefore can by no Means justify us ; and all our *Righteousness*, says the Prophet, *are but as filthy Rags*. *Wherewith then shall we come before the LORD, and bow down before the most High GOD ? Shall we come before Him with*

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Calves of a Year old, with Thousands of Rams, or ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil? Alas! GOD has shewed thee, O Man, that this will not avail. For he hath declared, I will take no Bullock out of thy House, nor He-goat out of thy Fold: For all the Beasts of the Forests are mine, and so are the Cattle upon a Thousand Hills. Will the Lord then be pleased to accept our First-born for our Transgression, the Fruit of our Bodies for the Sin of our Souls? Even this will not purchase our Pardon: For he has declared that the Children shall not bear the Iniquities of their Parents. Besides, they are Sinners, and therefore, being under the same Condemnation, equally stand in Need of Forgiveness with ourselves. They are impure, and will the LORD accept the Blind and Lame for Sacrifice? Shall some Angel then or Archangel undertake to fulfil the Covenant which we have broken, and make Atonement for us? Alas! they are only Creatures, tho' Creatures of the highest Order; and therefore are obliged to obey GOD as well as we; and after they have done all, must say they have done no more than what was their Duty to do. And supposing it was possible for them to die, yet how could the Death of a finite Creature satisfy an infinitely offended Justice? O wretched Men then that we are! Who shall deliver us? I thank GOD our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Which naturally leads me to the Third Thing proposed, which was to endeavour to prove, that

III. There is no Possibility of obtaining this Justification, which we so much want, but by the all-perfect Obedience and precious Death

Of Justification by CHRIST. 31

Death of JESUS CHRIST : *But ye are justified in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.*

But this having been in some Measure proved by what has been said under the foregoing Head, wherein I had shewn that neither our Repentance, Righteousness or Sacrifice, no not the Obedience and Death of Angels themselves, could possibly procure Justification for us, nothing remains for me to do under this Head, but to shew that JESUS CHRIST has procured it for us.

And here I shall still have Recourse to *the Law and to the Testimony*. For after all the most subtle Disputations on either Side, nothing but the lively Oracles of GOD can give us any Satisfaction in this momentous Point : It being such an inconceivable Mystery, that the Eternal only-begotten Son of GOD should die for sinful Man, that we durst not have presumed so much as to have thought of it, had not GOD revealed it in his Holy Word. It is true, Reason may shew us the Wound, but Revelation only can lead us to the Means of our Cure. And tho' the Method GOD has been pleased to take to make us happy may be to the Infidel a *Stumbling-block*, and to the wise Opiniator and Disputer of this World *Foolishness*; yet *Wisdom*, that is, the Dispensation of our Redemption, *will be justified*, approved of and submitted to by all her truly wise and holy *Children*, by every sincere and upright Christian.

But to come more directly to the Point before us. Two Things, as was before observed, we

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wanted, in order to be at Peace with GOD.

1. To be freed from the Guilt of the Sin of our Nature.

2. From the Sin of our Lives.

And both these (Thanks be to GOD for this unspeakable Gift) are secured to Believers by the Obedience and Death of JESUS CHRIST. For what says the Scripture?

As to the first it informs us, that as by the Disobedience of one Man, or by one Transgression, namely, that of *Adam*, many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one, JESUS CHRIST (therein including his passive as well as active Obedience) many were made Righteous. And again, *As by the Disobedience of one Man, Judgment came upon all Men unto Condemnation*; that is, all Men were condemned on having *Adam's Sin* imputed to them: *So by the Obedience of one, that is, JESUS CHRIST, the Free Gift of Pardon and Peace came upon all Men, i. e. all Sorts of Men unto Justification of Life, I say all Sorts of Men*: For the Apostle in this Chapter is only drawing a Parallel between the first and second *Adam* in this Respect, *viz.* That they acted both as Representatives; and as the Posterity of *Adam* had his Sin imputed to them, so those for whom CHRIST died, and whose Head Representative he is, shall have his Merits imputed to them also. Whoever run the Parallel farther in order to prove universal Redemption (whatever Arguments they may draw for

for the Proof of it from other Passages of Scripture,) if they would draw one from this for that Purpose, I think they stretch their Line of Interpretation beyond the Limits of Scripture.

2. Pardon for *the Sin of our Lives* was another Thing, which we wanted to have secured to us, before we could be at Peace with GOD.

And this the Holy Scriptures inform us is abundantly done by the Death of JESUS CHRIST. The Evangelical Prophet foretels that the promised Redeemer should be *wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities*; that *the Chastisement of our Peace should be upon him*; and that *by his Stripes we should be healed*, Isaiah liii. 6. The Angels at His Birth says, that he should *save his People from their Sins*. And St. Paul declares, that *this is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the World to save Sinners*: And here in the Words of the Text, *Such* (or, as I observed before, *these Things*) *were some of you*; but *ye are washed, &c.* and again, *JESUS CHRIST is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*, And, to shew us that none but JESUS CHRIST can do all this, the Apostle St. Peter elsewhere says, *Neither is there Salvation in any other*; for *there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, but the Name of JESUS CHRIST*.

How GOD will be pleased to deal with the Gentiles, who yet sit in *Darkness and under the Shadow of Death*, and upon whom the *Son of Righteousness* never yet arole, is not for us to

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quire. *What have we to do to judge those that are without?* To GOD's Mercy let us recommend them, and wait for a Solution of this and every other difficult Point till the great Day of Accounts, when all GOD's Dispensations, both of Providence and Grace, will be fully cleared up by Methods to us, it may be unknown, because unrevealed. However, this we know, that *the Judge of all the Earth will, most assuredly, do right.*

But it is Time for me to draw towards a Conclusion.

I have now then, *Brethren*, by the Blessing of GOD, discoursed on the Words of the Text in the Method I proposed. Many useful Inferences might be drawn from what has been delivered; but as I have detained you, I fear, too long already, permit me only to make a Reflection or two on what has been said, and I have done.

If then we are *freely justified* by the Death and Obedience of JESUS CHRIST, let us here pause a while; and as before we have reflected on the Misery of a *fallen*, let us now turn aside and see the *Happiness* of the *believing*, Soul. But alas! how am I lost to think that GOD the Father, when we were in a State of Enmity and Rebellion against Him, should notwithstanding yearn in his Bowels towards us his fallen, his apostate Creatures: And because nothing but an infinite Ransom could satisfy an infinitely offended Justice, should send his only and dear Son JESUS CHRIST (who is GOD, blessed for ever, and who had lain in his Bosom from all Eternity) to fulfil the Covenant of Works, and die
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a cursed, painful, ignominious Death, for us and for our Salvation! O who can avoid crying out, at the Consideration of this Mystery of Godliness — *Oh the Depth of the Riches of GOD's Love* to us his wretched, miserable and undone Creatures! *How unsearchable is his Mercy, and his Ways past finding out!* Now know we of a Truth, O GOD, that thou hast loved us, *since thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son JESUS CHRIST*, from thus doing and dying for us.

But as we admire the FATHER sending, let us likewise humbly and thankfully adore the SON coming, when sent to die for Man. But Oh! what Thoughts can conceive, what Words express the infinite Greatness of that unparalleled Love, which drew the Son of GOD down from the Mansions of his Father's Glory to *obey and die* for sinful Man! The *Jews*, when he only shed a Tear at poor *Lazarus's* Funeral, said, *Behold how he loved him*: How much more justly then may we cry out, *Behold how he loved us!* When he not only fulfilled the whole *Moral Law*, but did not spare to shed his own most precious Blood for us Men, and for our Salvation.

And can any poor truly-convicted Sinner, after this, despair of Mercy? What, can they see their Saviour hanging on a Tree, with Arms stretched out ready to embrace them, and yet, upon their truly believing on him, doubt of finding Acceptance with him? No, away with all such dishonourable desponding Thoughts — Look on his Hands, bored with Pins of Iron; look on his Side, pierced with a cruel Spear, to

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let loose the Sluices of his Blood, and open a Fountain for Sin, and for all Uncleanness—And then despair of Mercy if you can! No, only believe in Him, and then, *Though you have crucified him afresh, yet will he abundantly pardon you; though your Sins be as Scarlet, yet shall they be as Wool; though deeper than Crimson, yet shall they be whiter than Snow.*

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N III.

The Heinous Sin of Profane *Cursing and Swearing.*

MATTH. V. 34.

But I say unto you, Swear not at all.

AMONG the many heinous Sins for which this Nation is grown infamous, perhaps there is no one more crying, but withal more common than the abominable Custom of *profane Swearing and Cursing*. Our Streets abound with Persons of all Degrees and Qualities, who are continually provoking the Holy One of *Israel* to Anger, by their detestable Oaths and Blasphemies; And our very Children, *out of whose Mouths*, the Psalmist observes in his Days, *was perfected Praise*, are now grown remarkable for the quite opposite ill Quality of *Cursing and Swearing*. This cannot but be a melancholly Prospect for every sincere and honest Minister of JESUS CHRIST, to view his Fellow Creatures in; and such as will put him on contriving some Means to prevent the spreading at least of so growing an Evil; knowing that the LORD

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(without Repentance) will assuredly visit for these Things. But alas! what can he do? Publick Animadversions are so neglected amongst us, that we seldom find a common Swearer punished as the Laws direct? And as for private Admonition, Men are now so *hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin*, that to give them sober and pious Advice, and to shew them the Evil of their Doings, is but like *casting Pearls before Swine, they only turn again and rent you*. Since Matters then are come to this Pass, all that we can do is this, that as we are appointed Watchmen and Ambassadors of the LORD, it is our Duty from Time to Time to *shew the People their Transgression, and warn them of their Sin*; so that *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, we however may deliver our own Souls*. That I therefore may discharge my Duty in this Particular, give me Leave, in the Name of GOD, humbly to offer to your most serious Consideration, some few Observations on the Words of the Text, in order to *shew the Heinousness of profane Cursing and Swearing*.

But before I proceed directly to the Prosecution of this Point, it will be proper to clear this Precept of our LORD from a Misrepresentation that has been put on it by some, who infer from hence, that our Saviour prohibits *Swearing* before a Magistrate, when required on a solemn and proper Occasion. But that all *Swearing* is not absolutely unlawful for a *Christian*, is evident from the Writings of St. Paul, whom we often find upon some solemn Occasions using several Forms of Imprecation and Swearing, as, *I call GOD to Witness—*
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GOD is my Judge,—By your rejoicing in CHRIST JESUS, and such like. And that our Saviour does by no Means forbid *Swearing* before a Magistrate, in the Words now before us, is plain, if we consider the Scope and Design he had in View, when he gave his Disciples this Command. Permit me to observe to you then, that our Blessed Master had set himself, from the 27th Verse of this Chapter, out of which the Text is taken, to vindicate and clear the Moral Law from the corrupt Glosses and Misconstruction of the *Pharisees*, who then sat in *Moses's* Chair, but were notoriously faulty in adhering too closely to the literal Expression of the Law, without ever considering the due Extent and spiritual Meaning of it. Accordingly they imagined, that because GOD had said, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, that therefore, supposing a Person was not guilty of the very Act of *Adultery*, he was not chargeable with the Breach of the Seventh Commandment. And likewise in the Matter of *Swearing*, because GOD had forbidden his People in the Books of *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, to take his Name in vain, or to *Swear falsely* by his Name; they therefore judged it lawful to *Swear* by any Creature in common Discourse, supposing they did not directly mention the Name of GOD. Our Blessed Saviour therefore in the Words now before us, rectifies this their Mistake about *Swearing*, as he had done in the Verses immediately foregoing concerning *Adultery*, and tells the People, that whatever Allowances the *Pharisees* might give to *swear* by any Creature, yet he pronounced it absolutely unlawful for any of his Followers to do so. *You have heard, says he, that*

it has been said by them of old Time (namely by the Pharisees and Teachers of the Jewish Law) Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but perform unto the LORD thine Oaths: But I say unto you, (I who am appointed by the Father to be the great Prophet and true Law-giver of his Church) Swear not at all, in your common Conversation, neither by Heaven, for it is GOD's Throne; and therefore to swear by That, is to swear by Him that sits thereon; neither by the Earth, for it is his Foot-stool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the Great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one Hair white or black: But let your Communications (which plainly shews that CHRIST is here speaking of Swearing, not before a Magistrate, but in common Conversation, let your Communications) says he, be Yea, yea; Nay, nay, a strong Affirmation or Negation at the most; for whatsoever is more than this cometh of Evil; that is, cometh from an evil Principle, from the Evil One, the Devil, the Author of all Evil.

Which by the Way, methinks, should be a Caution to all such Persons, who, though not guilty of *Swearing* in the gross Sense of the Word, yet attest the Truth of what they are speaking of, though ever so trifling, by saying, *Upon my Life,—As I live,—By my Faith,—By the Heavens*, and such like: Which Expressions, however harmless and innocent they may be esteemed by some Sorts of People, yet are the very Oaths which our Blessed LORD condemns in the Words immediately following the Text; and Persons who use such unwarrantable Forms of speaking, must expect to be convicted and condemned

condemned as *Swearers*, at our Saviour's second Coming to judge the World.

But to return : It appears then from the whole Tenor of our Saviour's Discourse, that in the Words of the Text he does by no Means disannul or forbid *Swearing* before a Magistrate (which, as might easily be shewn, is both lawful and necessary) but only *profane Swearing* in common Conversation ; the Heinousness and Sefulness of which I come now, as was above proposed, more immediately to lay before you.

And here, not to mention that it is a direct Breach of our Blessed Master's and great Law-giver's Command in the Words of the Text, as likewise of the Third Commandment, wherein God positively declares, *he will not hold him guiltless* (that is, will assuredly punish him) *that taketh his Name in vain* : Not to mention that it is the greatest Abuse of that noble Faculty of Speech, whereby we are distinguished from the Brute Creation ; and the great Hazard the *common Swearer* runs, of being perjured some Time or other : Not to mention those Reasons against it, I say, which of themselves would abundantly prove the Folly and Sefulness of *Swearing* :— I shall at this Time, content myself with instancing in four Particulars, which highly aggravate the Crime of *profane Swearing*, and those are such as follow :

I. *First*, Because there is no Temptation in Nature to this Sin, nor does the Commission of it afford the Offender the least Pleasure or Satisfaction.

II. *Secondly*,

II. *Secondly*, Because it is a Sin which may be so often repeated.

III. *Thirdly*, Because it hardens Infidels against the *Christian Religion*, and must give great Offence, and occasion much Sorrow and Concern to every true Disciple of JESUS CHRIST.

IV. *Fourthly*, Because it is an Extremity of Sin, which can only be matched in Hell.

I. The *First* Reason then, why *Swearing* in common Conversation is so heinous in GOD's Sight, and why we should not swear at all, is, because it has no Temptation in Nature, nor does the Commission of it, unless a Man be a Devil incarnate, afford the Offender the least Pleasure or Satisfaction.

Now here, I presume, we may lay it down as a Maxim universally agreed on, that the Guilt of any Crime is increased or lessened in Proportion to the Weakness or Strength of the Temptation by which a Person is carried out to the Commission of it. It was this Consideration that extenuated and diminished the Guilt of *Saul's* taking upon him to offer Sacrifice before the Prophet *Samuel* came, and of *Uzza's* touching the Ark, because it was in Danger of falling: As on the contrary, what so highly aggravated the Disobedience of our first Parents and *Lot's* Wife, was, because the former had so little Reason to eat the forbidden Fruit, and the latter so small a Temptation to look back on *Sodom*.

And now if this be granted, surely the common Swearer must of all Sinners be the most without

without Excuse, since there is no Manner of Temptation in Nature to the Commission of his Crime. In most of the other Commands, Persons perhaps may plead the Force of Natural Inclination in Excuse for the Breach of them: One, for Instance, may alledge his strong Propensity to Anger, to excuse his breaking of the Sixth: Another his Proneness to Lust, for his Violation of the Seventh. But now surely the *common Swearer* has nothing of this kind to urge in his Behalf: For though he may have a natural Inclination to this or that Crime, yet no Man, it is to be presumed, can say, he is born of a *swearing Constitution*.

But farther, as there is no Temptation to it, so there is no Pleasure or Profit to be reaped from the Commission of it. Ask the Drunkard why he rises up early to follow strong Drink, and he will tell you, because it affords his sensual Appetite some kind of Pleasure and Gratification, though it be no higher an one than that of a Brute. Enquire of the covetous Worldling, why he defrauds and over-reaches his Neighbour, and he has an Answer ready,—To enrich himself, and to lay up Goods for many Years. But it must certainly puzzle the *profane Swearer* himself, to inform you what Pleasure he reaps from *Swearing*: For alas! it is a fruitless, tasteless Thing, that he sells his Soul for. But indeed he does not sell it at all: In this Case he prodigally gives it away (without Repentance) to the Devil; and parts with a blessed Eternity, and runs into everlasting Torment, merely for nothing!

II. But

II. But *Secondly*, what increases the Heinousness of *profane Swearing*, is that it is a Sin which may so often be repeated.

This is another Consideration which always serves to lessen or increase the Guilt and Malignity of any Sin. It was some Excuse for the Drunkenness of *Noah*, and the Adultery of *David*, that they committed these Crimes but once: As, on the contrary, of the Patriarch *Abraham's* Distrust of *GOD*, that he repeated the Dissembling of *Sarah* to be his Wife two several Times. And if this be admitted as an Aggravation of other Persons Crimes, surely much more so of the Guilt of *common Swearing*, because it is a Sin which may be and is for the generality often repeated. In many other gross Sins it cannot be so: If a Man be overcome in Drink, there must be a considerable Time e'er he can recover his Debauch, and return to his Cups again: Or if he be accustomed to profane the Sabbath, he cannot do it every Day, but only one in seven. But alas! the *profane Swearer* is ready for another Oath almost before the Sound of the first is out of our Ears: Yea, some double and treble them in one Sentence, even so as to confound the Sense of what they say, by an horrid Din of Blasphemy! Now if the great and terrible *Jehovah* has expressly declared that he *will not hold him guiltless*, that is, will assuredly punish him *that taketh his Name* but once *in vain*: What a vast Heap of these heinous Sins lies at every *common Swearer's* Door! It would be apt to sink him into an intolerable Despair, did he but see the whole Sum of them. And
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Oh! what a seared Conscience must that Wretch have, that does not feel this prodigious Weight!

III. But *Thirdly*, what makes the Sin of *profane Swearing* appear yet more exceeding sinful, is, that it hardens Infidels against the *Christian Religion*.

It is the Apostle St. *Peter's* Advice to the married Persons of his Time, that they should walk as became the Gospel of CHRIST, that those that were without, might be won to embrace the *Christian Religion*, by seeing and observing their pious Conversation coupled together with Fear. And what the Apostle presses on married Persons we find elsewhere enjoined each particular Member of the Church. Accordingly we are commanded by our Blessed LORD to *let our Light so shine before Men, that they may see our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*: And the Apostle St. *Paul* bids us *walk circumspectly towards them that are without, redeeming the Time*, that is, embracing all Opportunities to do them good, *because the Days are evil*. But alas! in what a direct Contradiction does the *profane Swearer* live to this and such like Precepts, who instead of gaining Profelytes to CHRIST from the unbelieving Part of the World, does all he can to oppose it! For how can it be expected, that Infidels should honour our GOD, when Christians themselves despise him; or that any should embrace our Religion, when Professors of it themselves make so light of one of its strictest Commands? No, to our Grief and Shame be it spoken, it is by reason of such Impieties as these that our *holy Religion*

gion (the best and purest in itself) is become a By-word among the Heathen; that the sacred Authority of the Holy JESUS and his Doctrine is despised; and *GOD's Name*, as it is written, *blasphemed among the Gentiles*.

These cannot but be sad stumbling Blocks and Offences in the Way of our Brethren's Conversion: *But woe be to those Men by whom such Offences come*: We may say of them as our blessed LORD did of Judas, *It had been better for such Men that they had never been born*: Or, as he threatens in another Place, *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for such Sinners*.

But this is not all; As *prophane Swearing* must undoubtedly harden those in their Infidelity, that are without, so must it no less grieve and give great Offence to those honest and sincere Persons that are within the Church. We hear of *David's* complaining and crying out, *Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Measeb, and to have my Habitation amongst the Tents of Kedar*: That is, that he was obliged to live and converse with a People exceedingly wicked and profane. And *St. Peter* tells us, that *Lot's righteous Soul was grieved day by day, whilst he saw and observed the ungodly Conversation of the Wicked*. And no doubt it was one great Part of our blessed Master's Sufferings whilst on Earth, that he was compelled to converse with a wicked and perverse Generation, and to hear his heavenly Father's sacred Name profaned and scoffed at by unrighteous and wicked Men. And surely it cannot but pierce the Heart of every true and sincere *Christian*, of every one that does in any Measure partake of the Spirit of his Master, to hear

hear the Multitude of Oaths and Curses which proceed daily and hourly out of the Mouths of many People, and those too whose liberal Education and seeming Regard for the Welfare of Religion, one would think, should teach them a more becoming Behaviour. To hear the great and terrible Name of GOD polluted by Men, which is adored by Angels; and to consider how often that sacred Name is profaned in common Discourse, which we are not worthy to mention in our Prayers: This, I say, cannot but make each of them cry out with holy *David*, *Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my Habitation amongst the Tents of Kedar.* And though the blasphemous and profane Discourses of others will not be imputed to sincere Persons for Sin, so long as they *have no Fellowship with such bellish Fruits of Darknesh,* but rather reprove them; yet it will greatly enhance the present Guilt, and sadly increase the future Punishment of every *profane Swearer*, by whom such Offences come. For if, as our Saviour tells us, *it had been better for a Man to have a Mill-stone tied about his Neck, than that he should offend one of his little ones,* that is, the weakest of his Disciples, *how much sorer Punishment will they be thought worthy of,* who not only cause GOD's Name to be blasphemed among the *Gentiles*, and the Religion of our dear Redeemer to be abhorred; but who make his Saints to weep and mourn, and *vex their righteous Souls from Day to Day*, by their ungodly, profane and blasphemous Conversation? Surely as GOD will put the Tears of the *one* into his Bottle, so it will be just in him to punish the *other* with
eternal

eternal Sorrow for all their ungodly and hard Speeches, and cast them into a Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where they shall be glad of a Drop of Water to cool those Tongues with which they have so often blasphemed the LORD of Hosts, and grieved the People of our GOD.

IV. But it is Time for me to proceed to give my *Fourth* and last Reason, why *common Swearing* is so exceeding sinful. And that is, because it is such an Extremity of Sin, that can only be matched in Hell, where all are desperate, and without Hope of Mercy.

The damned Devils and damned Souls of Men in Hell, may be supposed to rave and blaspheme in their Torments, because they know that the Chains wherein they are held can never be knocked off: But for Men that swim in the River of GOD's Goodness, *whose Mercies are renewed to them every Morning*, and who are visited with fresh Tokens of his infinite unmerited Loving-kindness every Moment: For these favourite Creatures to *set their Mouths against Heaven*, and to blaspheme a gracious, patient, all-bountiful GOD; is a Height of Sin which exceeds the Blackness and Impiety of Devils and Hell itself.

And now, after what has been here offered, to shew the Heinousness of *profane Cursing* and *Swearing* in common Conversation, may I not very justly address myself to you in the Words of the Text, *Therefore I say unto you, swear not at all*; since it is a Sin that has no Temptation in Nature, nor brings any Pleasure or Profit

fit to the Committer of it; since it hardens Infidels in their Infidelity, and affords sad Causes of Grief and Lamentation to every honest *Christian*; since it is a Sin that generally grows into a Habit; and lastly, such a Sin that can only be matched in Hell.

I. And first then, if these Things be so, and the Sin of *profane Swearing*, as hath been in some Measure shewn, is so exceeding sinful, what shall we say to such unhappy Men, who think it not only allowable, but fashionable and polite, to *take the Name of GOD in vain*; who imagine that *Swearing* makes them look big among their Companions, and really think it a piece of Honour to abound in it? But alas! little do they think that such a Behaviour argues the greatest Degeneracy of Mind and Fool-hardiness that can possibly be thought of. For what can be more base than one Hour to pretend to adore GOD in publick worship, and the very next Moment to blaspheme his Name: Indeed such a Behaviour from Persons who deny the Being of a GOD (if any such Fools there be) is not altogether so much to be wondered at: But for Men, who not only subscribe to the Belief of a Deity, but likewise acknowledge him to be a GOD of infinite Majesty and Power; for such Men, I say, to blaspheme his holy Name by *profane Cursing and Swearing*, and at the same Time confess, that this very God has expressly declared *He will not hold him guiltless*, that is, will certainly and eternally punish (without Repentance) him *that taketh his Name in vain*; is such an Instance of Fool-hardiness as well as Baseness, that can scarcely be parallel'd. This is what they pre-

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sume not to do in other Cases of less Danger: They dare not revile a General at the Head of his Army, nor rouse a sleeping Lion when within reach of his Paw. And is the Almighty God, the Great JEHOVAH, the everlasting King, who can consume them by the Breath of his Nostrils, and frown them to Hell in an Instant; is He, I say, the only contemptible Being in their Account that may be provoked without Fear, and offended without Punishment? No, tho' GOD bear long, he will not bear always: Time will come, and that too perhaps much sooner than such Persons may expect, when GOD will vindicate his injured Honour, when he will lay bare his Almighty Arm, and make those Wretches feel the eternal Smart of his Justice, whose Power and Name they have so often vilified and blasphemed. Alas! what will become of all their Bravery then? Will they then wantonly sport with the Name of their Maker, and call upon the King of all the Earth to damn them any more in Jest? No, their Note will then be changed: Indeed they shall call, but, alas! it will be for *the Rocks to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them from the Wrath of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the Lamb forever.* It is true, Time was when they prayed, though without Thought perhaps, for Damnation both for themselves and others: And now they will find their Prayers answered.—*They delighted in Cursing, therefore shall it happen unto them; they loved not Blessing, therefore shall it be far from them; they cloathed themselves with Cursing like as with a Garment, and it shall come into their Bowels like Water, and like Oil into their Bones.*

2. But farther, if the Sin of *Swearing* is so exceeding heinous and withal so common, then it is every particular Person's Duty, especially those that are in Authority, to do their utmost towards discountenancing and suppressing so malignant a Crime. The Duty we owe both to God and our Neighbour requires this at our Hands: By the one we are obliged to assert our Maker's Honour; by the other to prevent our Neighbour's Ruin: And is but *doing as we would be done by*, and as we ourselves act in Cases of lesser Consequence. Were we to hear either our own or our Friend's good Name vilified and traduced, we should think it our bounden Duty to vindicate the wronged Reputation of each: And shall the great, terrible and holy Name of our best and only Friend, our King, our Father, nay our God: Shall this, I say, be daily, nay every Moment, defied and blasphemed; and will no one dare to stand up in Defence of his Honour and Holiness? *Be astonished, O Heavens*, at this! No, let us scorn all such base and treacherous Treatment: Let us resolve to support the Cause of Religion, and with a becoming prudent Courage manifest our Zeal for the Honour of the LORD of Hosts. Men in Authority have double the Advantages of ordinary *Christians*: Their very Office shews they are intended for the Punishment of Evil Doers: And such is the Degeneracy of Mankind, that the Generality of them will be more influenced by the Power of Persons in Authority, than by the most laboured Exhortations from the Pulpit. To such therefore, if there are any here present, I humbly address myself, beseeching them in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to do their

utmost to put a stop to, and restrain *profane Cursing and Swearing*. And though it must be confessed that this is a Work which requires a great deal of Courage and Pains, yet they would do well to consider it is for GOD they undertake it, who certainly will support and bear them out in a due Execution of their Office here, and reward them with an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory hereafter. But it is Time to draw towards a Conclusion.

3. Let me therefore once more address myself to every Person here present, in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; and if any amongst them have been any way guilty of this notorious Sin of *Swearing*, let me intreat them by all that is near and dear to them, that they would neither give the Magistrate the Trouble to punish, nor their Friends any Reason for the future to warn them against committing the Crime; but keep a constant and careful *Watch over the Door of their Lips*, and withal implore the Divine Assistance (without which all is nothing) that *they offend no more so scandalously with their Tongues*. Let them seriously lay to Heart what with great Plainness and Simplicity has here been delivered: And if they have any Regard for themselves as Men, or their Reputation as *Christians*; if they would not be a publick Scandal to their Profession, or a Grief to all that know or converse with them: In short, if they would not be Devils Incarnate here, and provoke GOD to punish them eternally hereafter,—I lay unto them in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, *Swear not at all*.

S E R M O N IV.

The ETERNITY of HELL-TORMENTS.

MATTH. XXV. 46.

These shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.

THE Excellency of the Gospel Dispensation is greatly evidenced by those Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, which it offers to the Choice of all its Professors, in order to engage them to be obedient to its Precepts. For it promises no less than Eternal Happiness to the Good, and denounces no slighter a Punishment than Everlasting Misery against the Wicked—On the one Hand, *it is a Savour of Life unto Life*, on the other, *a Savour of Death unto Death*. And though one would imagine the bare mentioning of the former would be sufficient to draw Men to their Duty, yet Ministers in all Ages have found it necessary frequently to remind their People of the latter, and to set before them the Terrors of the LORD, as so many powerful Dissuasives from Sin.

But whence is it that Men are so disingenuous?—Why, the Reason seems to be this.—The Promise of Eternal Happiness is so agreeable to the Inclinations and Wishes of Mankind, that all that call themselves Christians, universally and willingly subscribe to the Belief of it. But then there is something so shocking in the Consideration of *Eternal Torments*, and seemingly such an infinite Disproportion between an endless Duration of Pain, and a short Life spent in Pleasure, that Men (some at least of them) can scarcely be brought to confess it as an Article of their Faith, that an Eternity of Misery awaits the Wicked in a future State.

I shall therefore at this Time beg Leave, to insist on the Proof of this Part of one of the Articles of our Creed; and endeavour to make good what our blessed LORD has here threatned in the Words of the Text, that *These*, that is, the *Wicked*, shall go away into *Everlasting Punishment*.

Accordingly, without considering the Words as they stand in Relation to the Context, I shall resolve all I have to say into this one general Proposition,—“That the Torments reserved for “the Wicked hereafter are eternal.”

But before I proceed to make good this, I must inform you that I take it for granted,

All here present stedfastly believe, “They
“have something within them, which we call
“a Soul, and which is capable of surviving the
“Dissolution of the Body, and of being miserable
“or happy to all Eternity.”

I take it for granted farther, “That you
“believe a Divine Revelation; that those Books,
“emphatically called *the Scriptures*, were written
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“ ten by the Inspiration of GOD, and that the
 “ Things therein contained, are founded upon
 “ Eternal Truth.”

I take it for granted lastly, “ That you be-
 “ lieve, that the Son of GOD came down to
 “ die for Sinners; that there is but one Me-
 “ diator between GOD and Man, even the Man
 “ CHRIST JESUS.”

These Things being granted (and they were
 necessary to be premised) proceed we now to
 make good the one general Proposition men-
 tioned before, and asserted in the Text, that
 “ the Torments reserved for the Wicked here-
 “ after are Eternal.”—*These*, says our blessed
 LORD, *shall go away into Everlasting Punish-*
ment.

The first Argument I shall advance to prove
 that the Torments reserved for the Wicked here-
 after are eternal (for I have taken it for granted,
 that you believe those Books, emphatically called
the Scriptures, were written by the Inspiration of
 GOD, and that the Things contained therein
 are founded upon Eternal Truth) is, That the
 Word of GOD himself assures us, in Line upon
 Line, that it will be so.

To quote all the Texts that might be pro-
 duced in Proof of this, would be endless.—Let
 it suffice to instance only in a few.—In the
Old Testament, in the Book of *Daniel*, Chap.
 xii. ver. 2. we are told, that *Some shall awake*
to Everlasting Life, and others to Everlasting
Contempt.—In the Book of *Isaiah*, it is said, that
The Worm of those that have transgressed GOD's
Law, and die impenitently, shall not die, nor their
Fire be quenched.—And in another Place, the Holy
 Prophet, struck, no doubt, with Astonishment

and Horror at the Prospect of the Continuance of the Torments of the Damned, breaks out into this moving Expostulation, *Who can dwell with Everlasting Burnings?*

The *New Testament* is still fuller as to this Point, it being a Revelation which brought this and such-like Particulars to a clear light.—The Apostle *Jude* tells us of the profane Despisers of Dignities in his Days, that *for them was reserved the Blackness of Darkness for ever*.—And in the Book of the *Revelations* it is written, that *The Smoke of the Torments of the Wicked ascendeth for ever and ever*.—And if we believe the Witness of Men inspired, the Witness of the Son of GOD, who had the Spirit given him, as he was a Mediator, without Measure, is still far greater.—And he, in St. *Mark's* Gospel, repeats this solemn Declaration three several Times. *It is better for Thee to enter into Life maimed;* that is, it is better to forego the Gratification of thy Lust, or incur the Displeasure of a Friend, which may be as dear to thee as a Hand, or as useful as a Foot, *then having two Hands and Feet*, that is, for indulging the one, or disobeying GOD to oblige the other, *to be cast into Hell, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*.

And here again, in the Words of the Text, *These*, that is, the Wicked, says he, *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*.

I know it has been objected by some who have denied the Eternity of Hell Torments,
 “ That the Words *Everlasting* and *Ever and*
 “ *Ever*, are often used in the Holy Scriptures,
 “ (especially in the *Old Testament*) when they
 “ signify

“ signify not an endless Duration, but a limited
“ Term of Time.”

And this we readily grant. But then we reply, That when the Words are used with this Limitation, they either manifestly appear to be used so from the Context.—or are put in Opposition to some occasional Types which God gave his People on some special Occasions, as when it is said, *it shall be a perpetual or everlasting Statute*, or a *Statute for ever*, that is, a standing Type, and not merely transient or occasional, as was the *Pillar of Cloud*, the *Manna*, or such like.—Or lastly, they have a Relation to that Covenant God made with his spiritual *Israel*, which, if understood in a spiritual Sense, will be everlasting, though the Ceremonial Dispensation be abolished.

Besides, it ought to be observed, that, some of the Passages just now referred to, have neither of these Words so much as mentioned in them, and cannot possibly be interpreted so as to denote only a limited Term of Years.

But let that be as it will, it is evident even to a Demonstration, that the Words of the Text however, will not admit of such a restrained Signification, as appears from their being directly opposed to the Words immediately following, *viz. That the Righteous shall go into Life eternal*. From which Words, all are ready to grant, that the Life promised to the Righteous will be Eternal; and why the Punishment threatned to the Wicked should not be understood to be Eternal likewise, when the very same Word in the Original, is used to express the Duration of each, no Shadow of a Reason can be given.

But *Secondly*, There cannot be one Argument urged, why GOD should reward his Saints with everlasting Happiness, which will not equally prove that he ought to punish Sinners with Eternal Misery.

For, since we know nothing (at least for a Certainty) how he will deal with either, but by a Divine Revelation; and since, as was proved by the foregoing Argument, he hath as positively threatned eternally to punish the Wicked, as to reward the Good; it follows that his Truth will be as much impeached and called in Question, did he not inflict his Punishments, as it would be, if he did not confer his Rewards.

To this also it has been objected, “That though GOD is obliged by his Promise to give his Rewards, yet his Veracity could not be called in Question, supposing he should not execute his Threatnings, as he actually did not in the Case of *Nineveh*, which God expressly declared by his Prophet *Jonah*, should be destroyed in Forty Days; notwithstanding the Sequel of the Story informs us, that *Nineveh* was spared.”

But in answer to this Objection we affirm, that GOD's Threatnings, as well as Promises, are without Repentance. And for this Reason, because they are both founded on the eternal Laws of right Reason.—Accordingly we always find, that where the Conditions were not performed, on the Non-performance of which the Threatnings were denounced, GOD always executed the Punishment threatned.—The driving *Adam* out of *Eden*, the Destruction of the old World by a Deluge of Water, and the Overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrath*, are, and will be always so

many standing Monuments of GOD's executing his Threatnings when denounced, though, to our weak Apprehensions, the Punishment may seem far to exceed the Crime.

It is true, GOD did spare *Nineveh*, and that because the Inhabitants did actually repent, and therefore performed the Conditions upon which it was supposed by the Prophet's being sent to warn them, the threatned Punishment should be withheld.

And so likewise in respect to Gospel Threatnings. If Men will so far consult their own Welfare as to comply with the Gospel Terms, GOD certainly will not punish them, but on the contrary, confer upon them his Rewards. But to affirm that HE will not punish, and that eternally too, impenitent, obstinate Sinners, according as he hath threatned, what is it, in Effect, but to make GOD like a Man, that he should lie, or the Son of Man that he should repent?

But the Absurdity of such an Opinion will appear still more evident from

The next and *Third* Argument I shall offer to prove, *that the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are eternal, viz.* From the Nature of the Christian Covenant.

And here I must again observe, that it was taken for granted at the Beginning of this Discourse, that, "You believe the Son of GOD came down to save Sinners; that there is but one Mediator between GOD and Man, even the Man CHRIST JESUS."

And here I take it for granted farther (unless you believe the absurd and unwarrantable Doctrine of Purgatory) that you are fully persuaded, that this Life is the only Time allotted by Al-

mighty GOD for working out our Salvation, and that after a few Years are passed over, there will remain no more Sacrifice for Sin.

And if this be granted (and who dares deny it?) it follows that if a wicked Man dieth in his Wickedness, and under the Wrath of GOD, he must continue in that State to all Eternity.— For, since there is no Possibility of his being delivered out of such a Condition but by and thro' CHRIST; and since, at the Hour of Death, the Time of CHRIST's Mediation and Intercession for him is irrecoverably gone; the same Reason that may be given, why GOD should punish a Sinner that dieth under the Guilt of his Sins for a single Day, will equally hold good, why he should continue to punish him for a Year, an Age, nay, to all Eternity.

But I hasten to the *Fourth* and last Argument, to prove, *That the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, viz. Because the Devil's Punishment is to be so.*

That there is such a Being whom we call the *Devil*, that he was once an Angel of Light, but for his Pride and Rebellion against GOD was cast down from Heaven, and is now permitted with the rest of his spiritual Wickednesses, to walk to and fro, seeking whom they may devour; That there is a Place of Torment reserved for them, or, to use the Apostle's Words, *that they are reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day*, are Truths all here present were supposed to be convinced of, when it was taken for granted under the second Proposition at the Beginning of this Discourse, that you believed the *Holy Scriptures*

Of HELL-TORMENTS. 61

tures to be written by the Inspiration of GOD, wherein these Truths are delivered.

But then if we allow all this, and think it no Injustice in GOD to punish those glorious Spirits for their Rebellion, how can we think it unjust in him, to punish wicked Men for their Impenitency to all Eternity?

You will say perhaps, that they have sinned against greater Light, and therefore deserve a greater Punishment. And so we grant that the Punishment of the fallen Angels may be greater as to Degree, than that of wicked Men. But then we affirm, it will be equal as to the Eternal Duration of it. For in that Day, as the lively Oracles of GOD inform us, shall the Son of Man say to them on his left Hand, *Depart from me ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*—Where we find that impenitent Sinners are to be cast into the same *Everlasting Fire*, with the *Devil* and his Angels, —And that too very justly.—For though they may have sinned against greater Light, yet Christians sin against greater Mercy. Since CHRIST took not hold of, did not die for the fallen Angels, but for Men and for our Salvation. So that if GOD spared not those excellent Beings, assure thyself, O obstinate Sinner, whoever thou art, he will by no means spare thee.

From what then has been said it plainly appears, that verily *the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal.*—And if so, Brethren, how ought we to fly to JESUS CHRIST for Refuge, how holy ought we to be in all Manner of Conversation and Godliness, that we may be accounted worthy to escape this Wrath to come!

But before I proceed to a practical Exhortation, permit me to draw an Inference or two from what has been said.

And first, *If the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal*, what shall we say to those, who make an open Profession in their Creed to believe a Life Everlasting, *i. e.* a Life of Misery as well as Happiness, and yet dare to live in the actual Commission of those Sins which will unavoidably, without Repentance, bring them into that Place of Torment? Thou believest the Punishments of the impenitently wicked in another Life, are Eternal: Thou doest well, *The Devils also believe and tremble*. But know, O vain Man, unless this Belief doth influence thy Practice, and makes thee bid Adieu to thy Sins, every Time thou repeatest thy Creed, thou doest in Effect say, I believe I shall be undone for ever.

But *Secondly*, if the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, then let this serve as a Caution to such Persons (and it is to be fear'd there are some such) who go about to dissuade others from the Belief of such an important Truth. There being no surer Way, in all Probability, to encourage and promote Infidelity and Prophaneness, than the broaching or maintaining such an unwarrantable Doctrine.— For if the positive Threats of GOD concerning the Eternity of Hell Torments are already found insufficient to deter Men from Sin, what a higher Pitch of Wickedness may we imagine they will quickly arrive at, when they are taught to entertain any Hopes of a future Recovery out of them, or, what is still worse, that their Souls
are

are hereafter to be annihilated, and become like the Beasts that perish? — But Woe unto such blind Leaders of the Blind. No Wonder if they both fall into the Ditch.—And let such Corrupters of GOD's Word know, that I testify unto every Man that heareth me this Day, that if any one shall add unto, or take away from the Words that are written in the Book of GOD, GOD shall take his Part out of the Book of Life, and shall add unto him all the Plagues that are in that Book.

Thirdly and Lastly, if the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, then this may serve as a Reproof for those who quarrel with GOD, and say it is inconsistent with his Justice, to punish a Person to all Eternity, only for enjoying the Pleasures of Sin for a Season. But such Persons must be told, that it is not their thinking or calling GOD unjust, will make him so, no more than a condemned Prisoner's saying the Law or Judge is unjust, will render either duly chargeable with such an Imputation.—But knowest thou, O Worm, what Blasphemy thou art guilty of, in charging GOD with Injustice? *Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* And wilt thou presume to arraign the Almighty at the Bar of thy shallow Reasoning? And call him unjust, for punishing thee eternally, only because thou wishest it may not be so? But hath GOD said it; and shall he not do it? He hath said it: And let GOD be true, tho' every Man be a Liar.—*Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Assuredly he will. And if Sinners will not own his Justice in his Threatnings here, they will
be

be compell'd e'er long to own and feel them when tormented by him hereafter.

But to come to a more practical Application of what has been delivered.

You have heard, Brethren, the Eternity of Hell-Torments plainly proved, from the exprefs Declarations of Holy Scriptures, and Consequences naturally drawn from them.—And now there seems to need no great Art of Rhetoric to persuade any understanding Person to avoid and abhor those Sins, which without Repentance will certainly plunge him into this eternal Gulph.—The Disproportion between the Pleasure and the Pain (if there be any Pleasure in Sin) is so infinitely great, that supposing it was only possible, though not certain, that the Wicked would be everlastingly punished, no one that has the Reason of a Man, for the Enjoying a little momentary Pleasure, would, one would imagine, run the Hazard of enduring Eternal Pain.—But since the Torments of the Damned are not only possible, but certain, (since GOD himself, who cannot lie, has told us so) for Men, notwithstanding to persist in their Disobedience, and then flatter themselves that GOD will not make good his Threatnings, is a most egregious Instance of Folly and Presumption.

Dives himself supposed, that if one rose from the Dead, his Brethren would amend their Lives; but Christians, in seems, will not repent, though the SON OF GOD has died and rose again, and told them what they must expect, if they still continue obstinate in Evil Doing.

Would we now and then draw off our Thoughts from sensible Objects, and, by Faith meditate a while on the Miseries of the Damned,

ned, I doubt not but we should, as it were, hear many an unhappy Soul venting his fruitless Sorrows in some such piteous Moans as these.

‘ O Wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death ! O foolish Mortal that I was, thus to bring myself into these never-ceasing Tortures, for the transitory Enjoyment of a few short-lived Pleasures, which scarcely afforded me any Satisfaction, even when I most indulged myself in them.— Alas ! are these the Wages, these the Effects of Sin ?—Are all the Grand Deceiver’s inviting Promises come to this ?—O damned Apostate ! First to delude me with pretended Promises of Happiness, and after several Years Drudgery in his Service, thus to involve me in eternal Woe.—Oh that I had never hearkened to his beguiling Insinuations ! Oh that I had rejected his very first Suggestions with the utmost Detestation and Abhorrence ! Oh that I had taken up my Cross and followed CHRIST ! Oh that I had never ridiculed serious Godliness ; and out of a false Politeness, condemned the truly Pious, as too Severe, Enthusiastic, or Superstitious ! For I then had been happy indeed, happy beyond Expression, happy to all Eternity, yonder in those blessed Regions where they sit, cloathed with unspeakable Glory, and chanting forth their seraphic Hallelujahs to the Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne, for ever.—But, alas ! these Reflections come now too late : These Wishes now are vain and fruitless. I have not suffered, and therefore must not reign with them.—I have in Effect denied the LORD that bought me, and therefore justly am I now denied by him.

‘ But

‘ But must I live for ever tormented in these
 ‘ Flames? — Must this Body of mine, which
 ‘ not long since lay in State, was cloathed in
 ‘ Purple and fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously
 ‘ every Day, must this be here eternally con-
 ‘ fin’d, and made the Mockery of insulting De-
 ‘ vils? Oh, Eternity! that Thought fills me
 ‘ with Despair. *I cannot, will not*, yet I must
 ‘ be miserable for ever.’

Come then, all ye self-deluding, self-deluded Sinners, and imagine yourselves for once in the Place of that truly wretched Man I have been here describing.—Think, I beseech you by the Mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, think with yourselves, how racking, how unsupportable the never-dying Worm of a self-condemning Conscience will hereafter be to you. Think how impossible it will be for you to *dwell with everlasting Burnings.*

Come, all ye *Christians* of a Lukewarm *Laodicean* Spirit, ye *Gallio's* in Religion, who care a little, but not enough for the Things of GOD, O think, think with yourselves how deplorable it will be to lose the Enjoyment of Heaven, and run into endless Torments, merely because you will be content to be *almost*, and will not strive to be *altogether Christians*.—Consider, I beseech you, consider, how you will rave, and curse that fatal Stupidity that made you believe any Thing less than true Faith in JESUS productive of a Life of strict Piety, Self-Denial, and Mortification, can keep you from those Torments, the Eternity of which I have been endeavouring to prove.

But I can no more—These Thoughts are too melancholy for me to dwell on, as well as for
 you

you to hear, and GOD knows, as Punishing is his strange Work, so denouncing his Threatnings is mine. But if the bare mentioning the Torments of the Damned is so shocking, how terrible must the enduring of them be!

And now are not some of you ready to cry out, *These are hard Sayings, who can bear them?*

But let not sincere *Christians* be in the least terrified at what has been delivered. No, for you is reserved a Crown, a Kingdom, an Eternal and exceeding Weight of Glory. CHRIST never said the Righteous, the Believing, the Upright, the Sincere, but the Wicked, Merciless, negatively good Professors before described, shall go into everlasting Punishment. For you, who love him in Sincerity, a new and living Way is laid open into the Holy of Holies by the Blood of JESUS CHRIST. And an abundant Entrance will be administered unto you, at the great Day of Account into Eternal Life. Take heed therefore, and beware that there be not in any of you a Root of Bitterness springing up of Unbelief. But, on the contrary, stedfastly and heartily rely on the many precious Promises reached out to you in the Gospel, knowing that he who hath promised is faithful, and therefore will perform.

But let no obstinately wicked Professors dare to apply any of the Divine Promises to themselves. *For it is not meet to take the Childrens Bread and give it unto Dogs.* No, to such the Terrors of the LORD only belong. And as certainly as CHRIST will say to his true Followers, *Come, ye blessed Children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning*

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Beginning of the World, so he will unalterably pronounce this dreadful Sentence against all that die in their Sins, Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

From which unhappy State *may* GOD of his infinite Mercy deliver us all through **JESUS CHRIST**; to whom with Thee, O FATHER, and Thee, O HOLY GHOST, Three Persons and One Eternal GOD, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for evermore.

S E R M O N V.

The Necessity and Benefits of RELIGIOUS SOCIETY.

ECCLES. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12.

*Two are better than One, because they
have a good Reward for their Labour.
For if they fall, the One will lift up his
Fellow : But woe be to him that is alone
when he falleth ; for he hath not an-
other to help him up.*

*Again, if Two lie together, then they have
Heat ; but how can One be warm alone ?
And if One prevail against him, Two shall
withstand him ; and a Threefold Cord
is not quickly broken.*

AMONG the many Reasons assignable for
the sad Decay of *True Christianity*, perhaps
the neglecting to *assemble ourselves together*, in
Religious Societies, may not be one of the least.
That I may therefore do my Endeavour towards
promoting so excellent a Means of Piety, I
have

have selected a Passage of Scripture drawn from the Experience of the wisest of Men, which being a little enlarged on and illustrated, will fully answer my present Design; that being to shew, in the best Manner I can, the *Necessity* and *Benefits* of *Society* in general, and of *Religious Society* in particular.

Two are better than One, &c.

From which Words I shall take Occasion to prove,

First, The Truth of the Wise Man's Assertion, viz. *Two are better than One*, and that in Reference to *Society* in general, and *Religious Society* in particular.

Secondly, To assign some Reasons why *Two are better than One*, especially as to the last Particular. 1. Because Men can raise up one another when they chance to slip: *For if they fall, the One will lift up his Fellow.* 2. Because they can impart Heat to each other: *Again, if Two lie together, then they have Heat; but how can One be warm alone?* 3. Because they can secure each other from those that do oppose them: *And if One prevail against him, Two shall withstand him; and a Threefold Cord is not quickly broken.* From hence,

Thirdly, I shall take Occasion to shew the Duty incumbent on every Member of a *Religious Society*.

Fourthly and lastly, I shall draw an Inference or two from what shall have been said; and

and then conclude with a Word or two of Exhortation from the whole.

First then, I am to prove the Truth of the Wise Man's Assertion, viz. that *Two are better than One*, and that in Reference to *Society* in general, and *Religious Societies* in particular.

And how can this be done better than by shewing that it is absolutely necessary for the Welfare both of the Bodies and Souls of Men? Indeed, if we look upon Man as he came out of the Hands of his Maker, we imagine him to be *perfect, entire, lacking nothing*. But GOD, whose *Thoughts are not as our Thoughts*, saw something still wanting to make *Adam* happy. And what was that? Why, an *Help* meet for him. For thus speaketh the Scripture: *And the LORD GOD said, It is not good that the Man should be alone, I will make an Help meet for him.*

Observe, GOD said, *It is not good*, thereby implying that the Creation would have been imperfect, *in some Sort*, unless an *Help* was found out *meet for Adam*. And if this was the Case of Man before the Fall; if an *Help* was *meet* for him in a State of Perfection; surely since the Fall, when we come naked and helpless out of our Mother's Womb, when our Wants increase with our Years, and we can scarcely subsist a Day without the mutual Assistance of each other, well may we say, *It is not good for Man to be alone.*

Society then, we see, is absolutely necessary in respect to our *bodily* and *personal* Wants. If we carry our View farther, and consider Mankind as divided into different Cities, Countries,
and

and Nations, the Necessity of it will appear yet more evident. For how can Communities be kept up, or Commerce carried on, without *Society*? Certainly not at all, since Providence seems wisely to have assigned a particular Product to almost each particular Country, on Purpose, as it were, to oblige us to be social; and hath so admirably mingled the Parts of the whole Body of Mankind together, *that the Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no Need of Thee; nor again, the Hand to the Foot, I have no Need of Thee.*

Many other Instances might be given of the *Necessity* of *Society*, in Reference to our *bodily, personal, and national* Wants. But what are all these when weighed in the Ballance of the *Sanctuary*, in Comparison of the infinite greater Need of it, with respect to the *Soul*? It was chiefly in regard to this better Part, no doubt, that God said, *It is not good for the Man to be alone.* For, let us suppose *Adam* to be as happy as may be, placed as the Lord of the Creation in the *Paradise* of God, and spending all his Hours in adoring and praising the blessed Author of his Being; as yet his Soul was the very Copy of the *Divine Nature*, whose peculiar Property it is to be communicative, *without the Divine All-Sufficiency*, he could not be compleatly happy, because he was alone and incommunicative, nor even content in *Paradise* for want of a *Partner* in his Joys. God knew this, and therefore said, *It is not good that Man should be alone, I will make a Help meet for him.* And though this proved a fatal Means of his falling; yet that was not owing to any natural Consequence of *Society*; but partly to that cursed Apostate, who

craftily

craftily lies in wait to deceive; partly to *Adam's* own Folly, in rather chusing to be miserable with one he loved, than trust in GOD to raise him up another Spouse.

If we reflect indeed on that familiar Inter-course our first Parents could carry on with Heaven, in a State of Innocence, we shall be apt to think he had as little Need of *Society*, as to his *Soul*, as we supposed him to have in Respect to his *Body*. But yet, as GOD and the Holy Angels were so far above him on the one Hand, and the Beasts so far beneath him on the other, there was nothing like having one to converse with, who was *Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh*.

Man, then, could not be fully happy, we see even in *Paradise*, without a Companion of his own Species, much less now he is driven out. For, let us view him a little in his natural Estate now, since the Fall, *as having his Understanding darkened, his Mind alienated from the Life of GOD*; as no more able to see his Way wherein he should go, than a Blind Man to describe the Sun: That notwithstanding this, he must receive his Sight e'er he can see GOD: And that if he never sees him, he never can be happy. Let us view him, I say, in this Light (or rather this Darkness) and deny the *Necessity of Society* if we can. A divine Revelation we find is absolutely necessary, we being by Nature as unable to know, as we are to do our Duty. And how shall we learn except one teach us? But was GOD to do this himself, how should we, with *Moses*, exceedingly quake and fear? Nor would the Ministry of Angels in this Affair be without too much Terror. It is necessary, therefore (at
E least

least GOD's Dealing with us hath shewed it to be so) that we should be *drawn with the Cords of a Man*. And that a Divine Revelation being granted, we should use one another's Assistance, under GOD, to instruct each other in the Knowledge, and to exhort one another to the Practice of those Things which belong to our everlasting Peace. This is undoubtedly the great End of Society intended by GOD since the Fall, and a strong Argument it is, why *Two are better than One*, and why we should *not forsake the assembling ourselves together*.

But farther, let us consider ourselves as *Christians*, as having this natural Veil, in some Measure, taken off from our Eyes by the Assistance of GOD's Holy Spirit, and so enabled to see what he requires of us. Let us suppose ourselves in some Degree to have *tasted the good Word of Life*, and to have felt the Powers of the World to come, influencing and moulding our Souls into a religious Frame: To be fully and heartily convinced that we are *Soldiers* lifted under the *Banner of CHRIST*, and have proclaimed open War at our *Baptism, against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*; and have, perhaps, frequently renewed our Obligations so to do, by partaking of the *Lord's Supper*: That we are surrounded with Millions of Foes without, and infested with a Legion of Enemies within: That we are commanded to shine as Lights in the World, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation: That we are travelling to a long Eternity, and need all imaginable Helps to shew us, and encourage us in our Way thither. Let us, I say, reflect on all this, and then how shall each of us cry out,

out, Brethren, what a necessary Thing it is to meet together in *Religious Societies*?

The Primitive *Christians* were fully sensible of this, and therefore we find them continually keeping up Communion with each other: For what says the Scripture? *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship*, Acts ii. 42. Peter and John were no sooner dismissed by the Great Council, than they hast away to their Companions. *And being set at Liberty*, says the Text, *they came to their own, and told them all these Things which the High-Priest had said unto them*, Acts iv. 23. Paul, as soon as converted, tarried three Day with the Disciples that were at Damascus, Acts ix. 19. And Peter afterwards, when released from Prison, immediately goes to the House of Mary, where there were great Multitudes assembled, praying, Acts xii. 12. And it is reported of *Christians* in After-Ages, that they used to assemble together before Day-light, to sing a Psalm to CHRIST as GOD. So precious was the *Communion of Saints* in those Days.

If it be asked, what Advantage we shall reap from such a Procedure now? I answer, much every Way. *Two are better than One, because they have a good Reward for their Labour: For if they fall, the One will lift up his Fellow; but woe be to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if Two lye together, then they have Heat; but how can One be warm alone? And if One prevail against him, Two shall withstand him; and a Three-fold Cord is not quickly broken.*

Which directly leads me to my Second general Head, under which I was to assign some Reasons why *Two are better than One*, especially in *Religious Society*.

1. As Man in his present Condition cannot always stand upright, nay by Reason of the Frailty of his Nature cannot but fall; one eminent Reason why *Two are better than One*, or, in other Words, one great Advantage of *Religious Society* is, *That when they fall, the One will lift up his Fellow*.

And an excellent Reason this, indeed! For alas! When we reflect how prone we are to be drawn into Error in our Judgments, and into Vice in our Practice; and how unable, at least how very unwilling, to espy or correct our own Miscarriages; when we consider how apt the World is to flatter us in our Faults, and how few there are so kind as to tell us the Truth; what an inestimable Privilege must it be to have a Set of true, judicious, hearty Friends about us, continually watching over our Souls, to inform us where we have fallen, and warn us that we fall not again for the future. Surely it is such a Privilege that (to use the Words of an *eminent Christian*) we shall never know the Value of, till we come to Glory.

But this is not all; for supposing that we could always stand upright, yet whosoever reflects on the Difficulties of Religion in general, and his own Propensity to Lukewarmness and Indifference in particular, will find that he must be *zealous* as well as *steady*, if ever he expects to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Here, then, the Wise Man points out to us another excellent Reason

Reason why *Two are better than One*. Again, says he, *If Two lie together, then they have Heat; but how can One be warm alone?*

Which was the next Thing to be considered under the second general Head, viz. To assign a second Reason why *Two are better than One*, because they impart *Heat* to each other.

It is an Observation no less true than common, That kindled Coals, if placed asunder, soon go out, but if heaped together, quicken and enliven each other, and afford a lasting Heat. The same will hold good in the Case now before us. If *Christians* kindled by the Grace of God unite, they will quicken and enliven each other; but if they separate and keep asunder, no marvel if they soon grow cool or tepid. If *Two* or *Three* meet together in CHRIST'S Name, *they will have Heat; but how can One be warm alone?*

Observe, *How can one be warm alone?* The Wise Man's expressing himself by Way of Question, implies an Impossibility, at least a very great Difficulty, to be warm in Religion without Company, where it may be had. Behold here, then, another excellent Benefit flowing from *Religious Society*; it will keep us *zealous*, as well as *steady*, in the Ways of Godliness.

But to illustrate this a little farther by a Comparison or two. Let us look upon ourselves (as was above hinted) as *Soldiers* listed under CHRIST'S Banner; as going out with *ten thousand* to meet *One* that cometh against us with *twenty thousand*: as Persons that are to wrestle not only with *Flesh and Blood*, but against *Principalities*, against *Powers*, and *spiritual Wickednesses in high Places*: And then tell me, all ye that fear God, if it be not an invaluable Privi-

lege to have a Company of *Fellow Soldiers* continually about us, animating and exhorting each other to stand our ground, to keep our Ranks, and manfully to follow the *Captain of our Salvation*, though it be through a Sea of Blood?

Lastly, Let us consider ourselves in another View before mentioned, viz. as Persons travelling to a long *Eternity*; as rescued by the *free Grace of GOD*, in some Measure, from our natural *Egyptian Bondage*, and marching under the Conduct of our *spiritual Joshua*, through the *Wilderness of this World*, to the Land of our *Heavenly Canaan*. Let us farther reflect how apt we are to startle at every Difficulty; to cry, *There are Lions! There are Lions in the Way! There are the Sons of Anak* to be grappled with, e'er we can possess the *promised Land*: How prone we are, with *Lot's Wife*, to look wishfully back on our *Spiritual Sodom*, or with the *Foolish Israelites*, to long again for the *Flesh-pots of Egypt*, and to return to our former natural State of Bondage and Slavery. Consider this, my Brethren, and see what a Blessed Privilege it will be to have a Set of *Israelites indeed* about us, always reminding us of the Folly of any such cowardly Design, and of the intolerable Misery we shall run into, if we fall in the least short of the *Promised Land*.

More might be said on this Particular, did not the Limits of a Discourse of this Nature, oblige me to hasten,

3. To give a Third Reason, mentioned by the Wise Man in the Text, why *Two are better than One*; namely, because they can secure each other from Enemies without. *And if One prevail against*

against him, yet Two shall withstand him; and a Threefold Cord is not quickly broken.

Hitherto we have considered the Advantages of *Religious Societies*, as a great Preservative against falling (at least dangerously falling) into Sin and Lukewarmness, and that too from our own Corruptions. But what says the Wise Son of *Sirach*? *My Son, when thou goest to serve the Lord, prepare thy Soul for Temptation*: And that not only from inward, but outward Foes; particularly from those two grand Adversaries, the *World* and the *Devil*: For no sooner will thine Eye be bent Heavenward, but the former will be immediately diverting it another Way, telling thee thou needest not be *singular* in order to be *religious*; that one may be a *Christian* without going so much out of the *Common Road*.

Nor will the Devil be wanting in his *artful* Insinuations, or *impious* Suggestions, to divert or terrify thee from pressing forwards, *that thou mayst lay hold on the Crown of Life*: And if he cannot prevail this Way, he will try another; and, in order to make his Temptation the more undiscerned, but withal more successful, he will employ, perhaps, some of thy nearest Relatives, or most powerful Friends (as he set *Peter* on our *blessed Master*) who will always be bidding thee *spare thyself*; telling thee thou needest not take so much Pains; that it is not so difficult a Matter to get to Heaven as some People would make of it, nor the Way so narrow as others imagine it to be.

But see here the Advantage of Religious Company; for supposing thou findest thyself thus surrounded on every Side, and unable to withstand such *horrid* (though seemingly *friendly*)

Counsels, *haste* away to thy Companions, and they will teach thee a truer and better Lesson; they will tell thee, that thou must be *singular* if thou wilt be *religious*; and that it is as impossible for a *Christian*, as for a City set upon a Hill, to be hid: That if thou wilt be an *almost Christian* (and as good be none at all) thou mayst live in the same idle indifferent Manner as thou seest most other People do: But if thou wilt be not only *almost*, but *altogether a Christian*, they will inform thee thou must go a great deal farther: That thou must not only *faintly seek*, but *earnestly strive to enter in at the strait Gate*: That there is but *One Way* now to Heaven as formerly, *viz.* through the narrow Passage of a *sound Conversion*: And that in order to bring about this mighty Work, thou must undergo a constant, but necessary Discipline of Fasting, Watching, and Prayer. And that therefore the only Reason why these Friends give thee such Advice, is, because they are not willing to take so much Pains themselves; or, as our Saviour told *Peter* on a like Occasion, because they *favour not the Things that be of GOD, but the Things that be of Men.*

This then, is another excellent Blessing arising from *Religious Society*, that Friends can hereby secure each other from those that oppose them. The *Devil* is fully sensible of this, and therefore he has always done his utmost to suppress, and put a Stop to the *Communion of Saints*. This was his grand Artifice at the first planting of the *Gospel*; to persecute the Professors of it, in order to separate them. Which, though God, as he always will, over-ruled for the better; yet it shews what an Enmity he has against *Christians*

Christians assembling themselves together. Not has he yet left off his old Stratagem; it being his usual Way to entice us *by ourselves*, in order to tempt us; where, by being destitute of one another's Helps, he hopes to lead us *captive at his Will*.

But, on the contrary, knowing his own Interest is strengthened by *Society*, he would first persuade us to neglect the *Communion of Saints*, and then bid us *stand in the Way of Sinners*, hoping thereby to put us into the *Seat of the Scornful*. *Judas* and *Peter* are melancholy Instances of this. The former had no sooner left his Company at Supper, but he went out and betrayed his Master: And the dismal Downfall of the latter, when he would venture himself amongst a Company of Enemies, plainly shews us what the Devil will endeavour to do, when he gets us by ourselves. Had *Peter* kept his own Company, he might have kept his Integrity; but a *single Card*, alas, how quickly was it broken? Our blessed Saviour knew this full well, and therefore it is very observable, that he always sent out his *Disciples Two by Two*.

And now, after so many Advantages to be reaped from *Religious Society*, may we not very justly cry out with the Wise Man in my Text, *Woe be to him that is alone; for when he falleth, he hath not another to lift him up: When he is cold, he hath not a Friend to warm him; when he is assaulted, he hath not a Second to help him to withstand his Enemy.*

III. I now come to my *Third general Head*, under which was to be shewn the several Duties incumbent on every Member of a

Religious Society, as such, which are three.

1. *Mutual Reproof.* 2. *Mutual Exhortation.* 3. *Mutual assisting and defending each other.*

1. *Mutual Reproof.* *Two are better than One: for when they fall, the One will lift up his Fellow.*

Now, Reproof may be taken either in a more extensive Sense, and then it signifies our raising a Brother by the gentlest Means, when he falls into Sin and Error; or in a more restrained Signification, as reaching no farther than those little Miscarriages, which unavoidably happen in the most holy Men living.

The wise Man in the Text, supposes all of us subject to both: *For when they fall* (says he, thereby implying that each of us may fall) *the One will lift up his Fellow.* From whence we may infer, that *when any Brother is overtaken with a Fault, he that is spiritual* (that is, regenerate, and knows the Corruption and Weakness of Human Nature) *ought to restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness.* And why he should do so, the Apostle subjoins a Reason *considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted; i. e.* considering thy own Frailty, lest thou also fall by the like Temptation.

We are all frail unstable Creatures; and it is merely owing to the *Free Grace and good Providence of GOD*, that we run not into the same *Excess of Riot* with other Men. Every offending Brother, therefore, claims our *Pity* rather than our *Resentment*; and each Member should strive who should be most forward, as well as
most

most gentle, in restoring him to his former State.

But supposing a Person not to be *overtaken*, but to fall *wilfully* into a Crime; yet who art thou that deniest Forgiveness to thy offending Brother? *Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.* Take ye, Brethren, the holy Apostles as eminent Examples for you to learn by, how you ought to behave in this Matter. Consider how quickly they joined the Right Hand of Fellowship with *Peter*, who had so wilfully denied his Master: For we find *John* and him together but two Days after, *John* xx. 2. And *ver.* 19. we find him assembled with the rest. So soon did they forgive, so soon associate with their sinful, yet relenting Brother — *Let us go and do likewise.*

But there is another kind of Reproof incumbent on every Member of a *Religious Society*; namely, *a gentle Rebuke for some Miscarriage or other, which, though not actually sinful, yet may become the Occasion of Sin.* This indeed seems a more easy, but perhaps will be found a more difficult Point than the former: For when a Person has really sinned, he cannot but own his Brethrens Reproof to be just; whereas, when it was only for some little Misconduct, the Pride that is in our Natures, will scarce suffer us to brook it. But however ungrateful this Pill may be to our Brother, yet if we have any Concern for his Welfare, it must be administered by some friendly Hand or other. By all Means then let it be applied; only, like a skillful Physician, *gild* over the ungrateful Medicine, and endeavour if possible, to *deceive* thy Brother into Health and Soundness. *Let all Bitterness, and Wrath,*
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and Malice, and Evil-speaking, be put away from it. Let the Patient know his Recovery is the only Thing aimed at, that thou delightest not causelessly to grieve thy Brother; and then thou canst not want Success.

2. *Mutual Exhortation* is the second Duty resulting from the Words of the Text. — *Again, if Two lye together, then they have Heat.*

Observe here again, the Wise Man supposes it as impossible for Religious Persons to meet together, and not to be the warmer for each other's Company, as for two Persons to lie in the same Bed, and yet freeze with Cold. But now, how is it possible to communicate Heat to each other, without mutually *stirring up the Gift of GOD* which is in us, by Brotherly Exhortation? Let ever Member then of a *Religious Society* write that zealous Apostle's Advice on the Tables of his Heart; *See that ye exhort, and provoke one another to Love, and to good Works; and so much the more as you see the Day of the LORD approaching.* Believe me, Brethren, we have Need of Exhortation to rouse up our sleepy Souls, to set us upon our Watch against the Temptations of the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*; to excite us to renounce ourselves, to take up our Crosses, and follow our blessed Master, and the glorious Company of Saints and Martyrs, *who through Faith have fought the good Fight, and are gone before us to inherit the Promises.* A third Part, therefore, of the Time wherein a *Religious Society* meets, seems necessary to be spent in
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this

this important Duty : For what avails it to have our Understandings enlightened by pious Reading, unless our Wills are at the same Time inclined, and inflamed by mutual Exhortation, to put it in Practice? Add to this, that this is the best Way both to receive and impart Light, and the only Means to preserve and increase that Warmth and Heat which each Person first brought with him ; GOD so ordering this, as all other spiritual Gifts, that *to him that hath, i. e.* improves and communicates what he hath, *shall be given ; but from him that hath not, i. e.* does not improve the Heat he hath, *shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have.* So needful, so essentially necessary, is Exhortation to the Good of Society.

3. Thirdly and lastly, The Text points out another Duty incumbent on every Member of a Religious Society, viz. *To defend each other from those that do oppose them. And if One prevail against him, yet Two shall withstand him ; and a Threefold Cord is not quickly broken.*

Here the wise Man takes it for granted, that Offences will come, nay, and that they may prevail too. And this is no more than our Blessed Master has long since told us. Not indeed, that there is any Thing in Christianity itself that has the least Tendency to give rise to, or promote such Offences : No, on the contrary, it breathes nothing but Unity and Love.

But so it is, that ever since the fatal Sentence pronounced by GOD, after our first Parents Fall, viz. *I will put Enmity between thy Seed and her Seed ; He that is born after the Flesh,* that is, the unregenerate unconverted Sinner, has

has in all Ages *persecuted him that is born after the Spirit*: And so it always will be. Accordingly we find an early Proof given of this in the Instance of *Cain and Abel*; and of *Ishmael and Isaac*; of *Jacob and Esau* afterwards. And indeed, the whole *Bible* contains little else but an History of the great and continued Opposition between the Children of this World and the Children of GOD. The first *Christians* were remarkable Examples of this; and though those troublesome Times, blessed be GOD, are now over, yet the Apostle has laid it down as a general Rule, and all that are sincere can experimentally prove the Truth of it; That *they that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, must* (to the End of the World, in some Degree or other) *suffer Persecution*. That therefore this may not make us desert our Blessed Master's Cause, every Member should unite their Forces, in order to stand against it. And for the better effecting this, each would do well, from Time to Time, to communicate his Experiences, Grievances, and Temptations, and beg his Companions (first asking GOD's Assistance, without which all is nothing) to administer Reproof, Exhortation or Comfort, as his Case requires: So that *if One cannot prevail against it, yet Two shall withstand it; and a Threefold* (much less a many-fold) *Cord will not be quickly broken*.

IV. But it is Time for me to proceed to the *Fourth general Thing* proposed, viz. To draw an inference or two from what has been said.

I. And

1. And first then, if *Two are better than One*, and the Advantages of *Religious Society* are so many and so great, then it is the Duty of every true *Christian* to set on Foot, establish and promote, as much as in him lies, *Societies* of this Nature. And I believe we may venture to affirm, that if ever a Spirit of true Christianity is revived in the World, it must be brought about by some such Means as this. Motives, surely, cannot be wanting, to stir us up to this commendable and necessary Undertaking: For granting all hitherto advanced to be of no Force, yet methinks the single Consideration that great Part of our Happiness in Heaven will consist in the *Communion of Saints*; or that the Interest as well as Piety of those that differ from us, is strengthened and supported by nothing more than their frequent Meetings; either of these Considerations, I say, one would think, should induce us to do our utmost to copy after their good Example, and settle a lasting and pious *Communion of the Saints* on Earth. Add to this, that we find the Kingdom of Darkness established daily by such like Means; and shall not the Kingdom of CHRIST be set in Opposition against it? Shall the Children of *Belial* assemble and strengthen each other in Wickedness; and shall not the Children of GOD unite, and strengthen themselves in Piety? Shall Societies on Societies be countenanced for Midnight Revellings, and the promoting of *Vice*, and scarcely one be found intended for the Propagation of *Virtue* and the Power of Godliness? Be astonished, O Heavens, at this!

2. But this leads me to a second Inference; namely, to warn Persons of the great Danger those are in, who either by their Subscriptions, Presence or Approbation, promote *Societies* of a quite opposite Nature to Religion.

And here I would not be understood to mean only those Publick Meetings which are designed manifestly for nothing else but Revellings and Banquetings, for Chambering and Wantonness, and at which a modest *Heathen* would blush to be present; but also those seemingly *innocent* Entertainments and Meetings which the *politer* Part of the World are so very fond of, and spend so much Time in: But which notwithstanding, keep as many Persons out of a Sense of *True Religion*, as Intemperance, Debauchery, or any other Crime whatever. Indeed, whilst we are in this World, we must have proper Relaxations, to fit us both for the Business of our Profession, and Religion. But then, for Persons who call themselves *Christians*, that have solemnly vowed, at their Baptism, *to renounce the Vanities of this sinful World*; that are commanded in Scripture *to abstain from all Appearance of Evil, and to have their Conversation in Heaven*: For such Persons as these to support Meetings, that (to say no worse of them) are vain and trifling, and have a natural Tendency to draw off our Minds from God, is absurd, ridiculous, and sinful. Surely *Two are not better than One* in this Case: No; it is to be wished there was not *One* to be found concerned in it. The sooner we forsake the *assembling ourselves together* in such a Manner, the better; and no matter how quickly the

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Cord that holds such *Societies* (was it a Thousand-fold) is broken.

But you, *Brethren*, have not so learned CHRIST: But, on the contrary, like true Disciples of your LORD and Master, have, by the Blessing of GOD, (as this Evening's Solemnity abundantly testifies) happily formed yourselves into such *Societies*, which, if duly attended on and improved, cannot but strengthen you in your Christian Warfare, and *make you fruitful in every good Word and Work.*

What remains for me to do, but, as was proposed, in the last Place, to close up what has been said, in a Word or two, by Way of Exhortation from the whole, and to beseech you, in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to go on in the Way you have begun; and by a constant conscientious Attendance on your respective *Societies*, to discountenance Vice, encourage Virtue, and *build each other up in the Knowledge and Fear of GOD.*

Only permit me to *stir up your pure Minds*, by Way of Remembrance, and to exhort you, if there be any Consolation in CHRIST, any Fellowship of the Spirit, again and again to consider, that as all *Christians* in general, so all Members of *Religious Societies* in particular, are in an especial Manner, as Houses built upon an Hill; and that therefore it highly concerns you to *walk circumspectly* towards those that are without, and to take heed to yourselves, that your Conversation, in common Life, be as becometh such an open and peculiar Profession of the Gospel of CHRIST: Knowing that the Eyes of all Men are upon you, narrowly to inspect every Circumstance of your

your Behaviour ; and that every notorious wilful Miscarriage of any single Member, will, in some Measure, redound to the Scandal and Dishonour of your whole Fraternity.

Labour, therefore, my beloved Brethren, to let your Practice correspond with your Profession : And think not that it will be sufficient for you to plead at the last Day, LORD have we not assembled ourselves together *in thy Name*, and enlivened each other, by *singing Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs* ? For verily, I say unto you, notwithstanding this, our blessed LORD will bid you *depart from him* ; nay, that you shall receive a greater Damnation, if, in the Midst of these great Pretensions, you are found to be *Workers of Iniquity*.

But GOD forbid that any such Evil should befall you ; that there should be ever a *Judas*, ever a Traitor amongst such distinguished Followers of our *Common Master*. No, on the contrary, the Excellency of your Rules, the Regularity of your Meetings, and more especially your pious Zeal in assembling in such a publick and solemn Manner so frequently in the Year, persuade me to think, that you are willing, not barely to *seem*, but to *be* in *Reality Christians* : And hope to be found at the *Last Day*, what you would be esteemed *now*, viz. holy, sincere Disciples of a Crucified Redeemer.

Oh, may you always continue thus minded ! and make it your daily, constant Endeavour, both by Precept and Example, to turn all you converse with, more especially those of your own *Societies*, into the same most Blessed Things :

Spirit and Temper. Thus will you adorn the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in all Things: Thus will you anticipate the Happiness of a future State; and by attending on, and improving the Communion of Saints on Earth, be made meet to join the Communion and Fellowship of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, of the Holy Angels, nay, of the Ever Blessed and Eternal GOD in Heaven.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant through JESUS CHRIST our Lord; to whom with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, Three Persons, and One Eternal GOD, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour and Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, now and for ever.

S E R M O N VI.

The ALMOST CHRISTIAN.

ACTS xxxvi. 28.

*Almost thou persuadest me to be a
Christian.*

THESE Words contain the ingenuous Confession of King Agrippa; which having some Reference to what went before, it may not be improper to relate to you the Substance of the preceding Verses, to which these Words are so closely connected.

The Chapter then, out of which the Text is taken, contains an admirable Account the great St. Paul gave of his wonderful Conversion from *Judaism* to *Christianity*, when he was called to make his Defence before *Festus* and another *Gentile* Governor. Our blessed LORD had long since foretold, that *When the Son of Man should be lifted up, his Disciples should be brought before Kings, for his Name's Sake, for a Testimony unto them*. And very good was the Design of infinite Wisdom in thus ordaining it: For *Christianity* being from the very Beginning
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a Doctrine of the Cross, the Princes and Rulers of the Earth thought themselves too high to be instructed by such mean Teachers, or too happy to be disturbed by such unwelcome Truths; and therefore would have always continued Strangers to JESUS CHRIST, and him Crucified, had not the Apostles, by being arraigned before them, gained Opportunities of preaching to them JESUS and the Resurrection. St. Paul knew full well that this was the main Reason, why his Blessed Master permitted his Enemies at this Time to arraign him at a publick Bar: And therefore, in Compliance with the Divine Will, thinks it not sufficient, barely to make his Defence, but endeavours at the same Time to convert his Judges. And this he did with such Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power, that Festus, unwilling to be convinced by the strongest Evidence, cries out with a loud Voice, *Paul, much Learning doth make thee mad.* To which the brave Apostle (like a true Follower of the Holy JESUS) meekly replies, *I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the Words of Truth and Soberness.* But in all Probability, seeing King Agrippa more affected with his Discourse, and observing in him an Inclination to know the Truth, he applies himself more particularly to him: *The King, says he, knoweth of these Things; before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these Things are hidden from him.* And then, that if possible he might compleat his wished-for Conversion, he with an inimitable Strain of Oratory, addresses himself still more closely, — *King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets? I know that thou believest them.* At which the Passions of the King began to work so strongly,

strongly, that he was obliged, in open Court, to own himself affected by the Prisoner's Preaching, and ingenuously to cry out,— *Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

Which Words, taken with the Context, afford us a lively Representation of the different Reception the Doctrine of CHRIST's Ministers, who come in the Power and Spirit of St. *Paul*, meets with now-a-days in the Minds of Men. For notwithstanding they, like this great Apostle, *speak forth the Words of Truth and Soberness*; and with such Energy and Power, that *all their Adversaries cannot justly gainsay or resist*; yet, too many, with the most noble *Festus* before mentioned, being, like him, either too proud to be taught, or too sensual, too careless, or too worldly-minded to live up to their Doctrine, in order to excuse themselves, cry out, that *much Learning*, much Study, or, what is more unaccountable, much Piety, *bath made them mad*. And though, blessed be GOD! all do not thus disbelieve our Report; yet amongst those many others, who gladly receive the Word, and confess that we speak the Words of Truth and Soberness, there are so few, who arrive at any higher Degree of Piety than that of *Agrippa*, or are any farther persuaded than to be *almost Christians*,— that I cannot but think it highly necessary to warn my dear Hearers of the Danger of such a State. And therefore, from the Words of the Text, shall endeavour to consider these three Things :

First, What is meant by an *Almost Christian*.

Secondly, What are the chief Reasons, why so many are no more than *Almost Christians*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I shall consider the Ineffectualness, Danger, Absurdity, and Uneasiness that attends those that are but *Almost Christians*.

Fourthly, I shall conclude with a general Exhortation, to set all upon striving not only to be *Almost*, but *Altogether Christians*.

I. And *First* I am to consider what is meant by an *Almost Christian*.

An *Almost Christian* then, if we consider him in respect to his Duty to GOD, is one that halts between two Opinions, that wavers between CHRIST and the World; that would reconcile GOD and *Mammon*, that is, Light and Darkness, CHRIST and *Belial*. It is true, He has an Inclination to Religion, but then he is very cautious how he goes too far in it: His false Heart is always crying out, Spare thyself, do thyself no Harm. He prays indeed, that GOD's Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: But then, notwithstanding he is very partial in his Obedience, and fondly hopes that GOD will not be extreme to mark every Thing that he wilfully does amiss; though an inspired Apostle has told him, that he that offends in one Point is guilty of all. Above all, he is one that depends much on outward Ordinances, and upon that Account looks upon himself as *Righteous*, and despises others; though at the same Time he may be as great a Stranger to the Divine Life as any other Person whatsoever. In short, he is fond of the *Form*, but never experiences the *Power of Godliness* in his Heart: He goes on Year after Year, feeding and attending on the Means of Grace; but

but then, like *Pharaoh's* lean Kine, is never the better, but rather the worse for them.

If you consider him in Respect to his Neighbour, he is one that is strictly just to all; but then this does not proceed from any Love to God or Regard to Man, but only out of a Principle of Self-Love; because he knows Dishonesty will spoil his Reputation, and consequently hinder his Thriving in the World.

He is one that depends much on being Negatively good, and contents himself with the Consciousness of having done no one any Harm; though he reads in the Gospel, that *the unprofitable Servant was cast into outer Darkness*, and the barren Fig-Tree cursed and dried up from the Roots, not for bearing bad, but no Fruit.

He is no Enemy to charitable Contributions in public, if not too frequently recommended: But then he is unacquainted with the kind Offices of *visiting the Sick and Imprisoned, cloathing the Naked, and relieving the Hungry in a private Manner*. He thinks that these Things belong only to the Clergy, though his own false Heart tells him, that nothing but Pride keeps him from exercising these Acts of Humility, and that JESUS CHRIST, in the 25th Chapter of St. *Matthew*, condemns Persons to everlasting Punishment, not for being Fornicators, Drunkards, or Extortioners, but for neglecting these charitable Offices, *When the Son of Man, says our blessed LORD himself, shall come in his Glory, He shall set the Sheep on his Right Hand, and the Goats on his Left. And then shall He say unto them on his Left Hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels: For I was an Hungred,*
and

and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; Naked, and ye cloathed me not; Sick and in Prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also say, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or a-thirst, or a Stranger, or naked, or sick, or in Prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall he answer them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye did it not unto me: And these shall go away into everlasting Punishment. I thought proper to give you this whole Passage of Scripture at large, because our Saviour lays such a particular Stress upon it; and yet notwithstanding it is so little regarded, that were we to judge by the Practice of *Christians*, one should be tempted to think there were no such Verses in the *Bible*.

But to proceed in our Character of an *Almost Christian*: If we consider him in respect of himself; as before we said he was strictly honest to his Neighbour, so he is likewise strictly sober in himself: But then both his Honesty and Sobriety proceed from the same Principle of a false Self-Love. It is true, he *runs not into the same Excess of Riot* with other Men; but then it is not out of Obedience to the Laws of GOD, but either because his Constitution will not away with Intemperance; or rather because he is cautious of forfeiting his Reputation, or unfitting himself for temporal Business. But though he is so prudent as to avoid Intemperance and Excess, for the Reasons before mentioned; yet he always goes to the Extremity of what is lawful. It is true, he is no Drunkard; but then he has no *Christian Self-Denial*. He cannot think our

Saviour to be so austere a Master, as to deny us to indulge ourselves in some Particulars: And so by this Means he is kept out of a Sense of true Religion, as much as if he lived in Debauchery, or any other Crime whatever. As to settling his Principles as well as Practice, he is guided more by the World, than by the Word of GOD. As for his Part, he cannot think the Way to Heaven so narrow as some would make it: And therefore considers not so much what Scripture requires, as what such and such a good Man does, or what will best suit his own corrupt Inclinations. Upon this Account, he is not only very cautious himself, but likewise very careful of young Converts, whose Faces are set Heavenward; and therefore is always acting the Devil's Part, and bidding them *spare themselves*, though they are doing no more than what the Scripture strictly requires them to do: The Consequence of which is, that *he suffers not himself to enter into the Kingdom of GOD, and those that are entering in he hinders.*

Thus lives the *Almost Christian*: Not that I can say, I have fully described him to you; but from these Out-lines and Sketches of his Character, if your Consciences have done their proper Office, and made a particular Application of what has been said to your own Hearts, I cannot but fear that some of you may observe some Features in his Picture, odious as it is, too near resembling your own; and therefore cannot but hope, at the same Time, that you join with the Apostle in the Words immediately following the Text, and wish yourselves *not only almost, but altogether Christians.*

II. But I proceed to the *Second general Thing* proposed ; namely, to consider the Reasons why so many are no more than *Almost Christians*.

I. And the first Reason I shall mention is, because so many set out with false Notions of Religion ; and though they live in a *Christian Country*, yet know not what *Christianity* is. This perhaps may be esteemed a hard Saying, but Experience sadly evinces the Truth of it ; For some place Religion in being of this or that Communion ; more in Morality ; most in a Round of Duties, and a Model of Performances ; and few, very few acknowledge it to be, what it really is, a thorough inward Change of Nature, a Divine Life, a Vital Participation of JESUS CHRIST, an Union of the Soul with GOD ; which the Apostle expresses by saying, *He that is joined to the LORD is one Spirit*. Hence it happens that so many, even of the most knowing Professors when you come to converse with them concerning the Essence, the Life, the Soul of Religion, I mean our *New Birth* in JESUS CHRIST, confess themselves quite ignorant of the Matter, and cry out with *Nicodemus*, *How can this Thing be ?* And no wonder then, that so many are only *Almost Christians*, when so many know not what *Christianity* is : No Marvel so many take up with the *Form*, when they are quite Strangers to the *Power of Godliness* ; or content themselves with the Shadow, when they know so little about the Substance of it. And this is one Cause why so many are *almost*, why so few are *altogether Christians*.

2. A Second Reason that may be assigned why so many are no more than *almost Christians*, is a servile Fear of Man: Multitudes there are and have been, who, tho' awakened to a Sense of the Divine Life, and *have tasted and felt the Powers of the World to come*; yet out of a base sinful Fear of being counted singular, or contemned by Men, have suffered all those good Impressions to wear off again. It is true they have some Esteem for JESUS CHRIST; but then, like *Nicodemus*, they would *come to him only by Night*: They are willing to serve him; but then they would do it *secretly, for Fear of the Jews*: They *have a Mind to see JESUS*, but then *they cannot come to him because of the Jews*, for Fear of being laughed at, and ridiculed by those with whom they used to sit at Meat. But well did our Saviour prophesy of such Persons, *How can ye love me which receive Honour one of another?* Alas! have they never read, that *the Friendship of this World is Enmity with GOD*; and that our LORD himself has threatned, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me or of my Words, in this wicked and adulterous Generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father and of his Holy Angels?* But no Wonder that so many are no more than *almost Christians* since so many love the Praise of Men more than the Honour which cometh of GOD.

3. A third Reason why so many are no more than *Almost Christians*, is a reigning Love of Money. This was the pitiable Case of that forward young Man in the Gospel, who came running to our Blessed LORD, and kneeling before him, enquired what *He must do to inherit Eternal*

nal

nal Life; to which our blessed Master replied, *Thou knowest the Commandments, Do not Kill, Do not commit Adultery, Do not steal*: To which the young Man replied, *All these have I kept from my Youth*. But when our Lord proceeded to tell him, *Yet lackest thou one Thing, Go sell all that thou hast and give to the Poor,—* he was grieved at that Saying, and went away sorrowful, for he had great Possessions! Poor Youth! he had a good Mind to be a *Christian*, and to inherit Eternal Life, but thought it too dear, if it could be purchased at no less an Expence than of his whole Estate! And thus many, both Young and Old, now-a-Days, come running to worship our blessed LORD in public, and kneel before him in private, and enquire at his Gospel, what must they do to inherit Eternal Life: But when they find they must renounce the Self-Enjoyment of Riches, and forsake all in Affection to follow him, they cry, *The LORD pardon us in this Thing!—We pray Thee, have us excused.*

But is Heaven so small a Trifle in such Men's Esteem, as not to be worth a little gilded Earth? Is Eternal Life so mean a Purchase, as not to deserve the Temporary Renunciation of a few transitory Riches? Surely it is. But however inconsistent such a Behaviour may be, this inordinate Love of Money is too evidently the common and fatal Cause why so many are no more than *Almost Christians*.

4. Nor is the reigning Love of Pleasure a less uncommon, or a less fatal Cause why so many are no more than *almost Christians*. Thousands and ten Thousands there are, who despise Riches, and would willingly be true Disciples of

JESUS CHRIST, would parting with their Money make them so; but when they are told that our Blessed LORD has said, that *Whosoever will come after Him must deny himself*;—Like the pitiable young Man before mentioned, *they go away sorrowful*: For they have too great a Love for sensual Pleasures. They will, like *Herod*, perhaps send for the Ministers of CHRIST, as he did for *John*, and *hear them gladly*: But touch them in their *Herodias*, tell them they must part with such or such a darling Pleasure; and with wicked *Ahab* they cry out, *Hast thou found us, O our Enemy?* Tell them of the Necessity of *Mortification, Fasting, and Self-Denial*, and it is as difficult to them to hear, as if you was to bid them *cut off a Right Hand, or pluck out a Right Eye*: They cannot think our Blessed LORD requires so much at their Hands, though an inspired Apostle has commanded us to *mortify our Members which are upon Earth*: And he himself, even after he had converted Millions, and was very near arrived to the End of his Race, yet professed that it was his daily Practice to *keep under his Body, and bring it into Subjection, lest after he had preached to others, he himself should be a Cast-away!*

But some Men would be wiser than this great Apostle, and chalk out to us what they falsely imagine an easier Way to Happiness. They would flatter us we may go to Heaven without offering Violence to our sensual Appetites; and *enter into the strait Gate* without striving against our carnal Inclinations. And this is another Reason why so many are only *almost*, and not altogether Christians.

5. The fifth and last Reason I shall assign why so many are only *almost Christians*, is a Fickleness and Instability of Temper.

It has been, no doubt, the Misfortune that many a Minister and *sincere Christian* has met with, to weep and wail over Numbers of promising Converts, who *seemingly* began in the Spirit, but after a while have fell away, and *basely* ended in the Flesh; and this not for Want of right Notions in Religion, nor out of a servile Fear of Man, nor out of Love of *Money* or sensual Pleasure, but out of an Instability and Fickleness of Temper. They looked upon Religion merely for Novelty, as something which pleased them for a while; but after their Curiosity was satisfied, they have laid it aside again: Like the young Man that came to see Jesus with a Linnen Cloth about his naked Body, they have followed him for a Season, but when Temptations have come to take hold on them, for want of a little more Resolution, they have been stripped of all their good Intentions, and fled *away naked*. They at first, *like a Tree planted by the Waterside*, grew up and flourished for a while; but *having no Root in themselves*, no inward Principle of Holiness and Piety, like *Jonah's Gourd*, were soon *dried up, cut down and withered*. Their good Intentions are but too like the violent Motions of the Animal Spirits of a Body newly beheaded, which, tho' impetuous, are not lasting. In short, they set out well in their Journey to Heaven, but finding the Way either narrower or longer than they expected, through an Unsteadiness of Temper, they have made an eternal Halt, and so *returned like the Dog to his*

Vomit or like the Sow that was washed to her wall in the Mire !

But I tremble to pronounce the Fate of such unstable Professors, *who having put their Hands to the Plow, for want of a little more Resolution, shamefully look back.* How shall I repeat to them that dreadful Threatning, *If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him :* And again, *It is impossible, that is, exceeding difficult at least, for those that have been once enlightened, and have tasted the good Gift of GOD's Holy Spirit, and the Powers of the World to come, if they should fall away, to be renewed again unto Repentance.* But notwithstanding the Gospel is so severe against Apostates, yet many that begun well, through a Fickleness of Temper, (Oh that none of us here present may ever be such) have been by this means of *the Number of those that turn back unto Perdition.* And this is the fifth and last Reason I shall give, why so many are only *almost*, and not altogether *Christians.*

III. Proceed we now to the *Third General Thing* proposed, namely, to consider the Folly of being no more than an *almost Christian.*

And the first Proof I shall give of the Folly of such a Proceeding is,— that it is ineffectual to Salvation. It is true, such Men are almost good ; but *almost* to hit the Mark, is *really* to miss it. GOD requires us to *love him with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength :* He loves us too well to admit any Rival ; because so far as our Hearts are empty of GOD, so far

far must they be unhappy. The Devil, indeed, like the false Mother that came before *Salomon*, would have our Hearts divided, as she would have had the Child; but *GOD*, like the true Mother, will have all or none. *My Son give me thy Heart*, thy whole Heart, is the general Call to all: And if this be not done, we never can expect the divine Mercy.

Persons may play the Hypocrite; but *GOD* at the Great Day will strike them dead, (as he did *Ananias* and *Sapphira* by the Mouth of his Servant *Peter*) for pretending to offer him all their Hearts, when they *keep back* from him the greatest Part. They may perhaps impose upon their fellow Creatures for a while; but He that enabled *Elijah* to cry out, *Come in thou Wife of Jeroboam*, when she came disguised to enquire about her sick Son, will also discover them thro' their most artful Dissimulations, and if *their Hearts are not whole with him*, appoint them their Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers.

But *secondly*, What renders an half-way Piety more inexcusable is, that it is not only insufficient to our own Salvation, but also most prejudicial to that of others.

An *Almost Christian* is one of the most hurtful Creatures in the World: He is a *Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing*; he is one of those false Prophets our blessed *LORD* bids us beware of in his Sermon on the Mount, who would persuade Men, that the Way to Heaven is broader than it really is; and thereby, as it was observed before, *enter not into the Kingdom of GOD themselves, and those that are entering in they hinder*. These, these are the Men that turn the World into a lukewarm *Laodicean* Spirit; that hang out false

Lights, and so shipwreck unthinking benighted Souls in their Voyage to the Haven of Eternity. These are they that are greater Enemies to the Cross of CHRIST, than Infidels themselves: For of an Unbeliever every one will be aware; but an *Almost Christian*, through his subtle Hypocrisy, *draws away many after him*; and therefore must expect to *receive the greater Damnation*.

But *thirdly*, as it is most prejudicial to ourselves and hurtful to others, so it is the greatest Piece of Ingratitude we can express towards our Lord and Master JESUS CHRIST. For did he come down from Heaven, and shed his precious Blood, to purchase these Hearts of ours, and shall we only give him half of them? Oh how can we say we love him, when our Hearts are not wholly with him? How can we call him our Saviour, when we will not endeavour sincerely to approve ourselves to him, and so let him see the Travail of his Soul, and be satisfied!

Had any of us purchased a Slave at a most expensive Rate, that was before involved in the utmost Miseries and Torments, and so must have continued for ever, had we shut up our Bowels of Compassion from him; and was this Slave afterwards to grow rebellious, or deny giving us but half his Service: How, how should we exclaim against his base Ingratitude! And yet this base ungrateful Slave thou art, O Man, who acknowledgest thyself to be redeemed from infinite unavoidable Misery and Punishment by the Death of JESUS CHRIST, and yet wilt not give thyself wholly to him. But shall we deal with GOD our Maker in a Manner we would
not

not be dealt with by a Man like ourselves?
GOD forbid! No.

That I may come to the *last Thing* proposed, namely, to add a Word or two of Exhortation to be not only *almost*, but *altogether Christians*, let us scorn all such base and treacherous Treatment of our King and Saviour, nay our GOD. Let us not take some Pains all our Lives to go to Heaven, and yet plunge ourselves into Hell at last. Let us give GOD our whole Hearts, and no longer *halt between two Opinions*: If the World be GOD let us serve That; If Pleasure be a GOD let us serve That; but if the LORD He be GOD, let us, Oh let us serve Him alone. Alas! why, why should we stand out any longer? Why should we be so in Love with Slavery, as not wholly to renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, which, like so many spiritual Chains, bind down our Souls, and hinder them from flying up to GOD. Alas! what are we afraid of? Is not GOD able to reward our entire Obedience? If he is, as the *almost Christian's* lame Way of serving him seems to grant,—Why then will we not serve him entirely? For the same Reason we do so much, why do we not do more? Or do you think that being only half Religious will make you happy, but that going farther will render you miserable and uneasy? Alas! this, *my Brethren*, is Delusion all over: For what is it but this *half Piety*, this wavering between GOD and the World, that makes so many that are seemingly well disposed, such utter Strangers to the Comforts of Religion? They chuse just so much of Religion as will disturb them in their Lusts, and follow their Lusts so far as to de-

prive themselves of the Comforts of Religion. Whereas on the contrary, would they sincerely *leave all* in Affection, and *give their Hearts wholly to GOD*, they would then (and they cannot till then) experience the unspeakable Pleasure of having a Mind at Unity with itself, and enjoy such a *Peace of GOD*, which even in this Life, *passes all Understanding*, and which they were entire Strangers to before. It is true, if we will devote ourselves entirely to God, we must meet with Contempt; but then it is because Contempt is necessary to heal our Pride. We must renounce some sensual Pleasure; but then it is because those unfit us for Spiritual ones, which are infinitely better. We must renounce the Love of the World; but then it is that we may be filled with the Love of God: And when that has once enlarged our Hearts, we shall, like *Jacob* when he served for his beloved *Rachel*, think nothing too difficult to undergo, no Hardships too tedious to endure, because of the Love we shall then have for our dear Redeemer. Thus easy, thus delightful will be the Ways of God even in this Life: But when once we throw off these Bodies, and our Souls are *filled with all the Fullness of GOD*, Oh! what Heart can conceive, what Tongue can express, with what unspeakable Joy and Consolation we shall then look back on our past sincere and hearty Services. Think you then, my dear Hearers, we shall repent we had done too much; or rather think you not we shall be ashamed that we did no more; and blush we were so backward to give up all to God; when He intended hereafter to give us Himself?

Let

Let me therefore, to conclude, exhort you, *my Brethren*, to have always the unspeakable Happiness of enjoying God set before you: And think withal, that every Degree of Holiness you neglect, every Instance of Piety you pass by, is a Jewel taken out of your Crown, a degree of Blessedness lost in the Vision of God. Oh! do but always think and act thus, and you will no longer be labouring to compound Matters between God and the World; but on the contrary, be daily endeavouring to give up yourselves more and more unto him; you will be always Watching, always praying, always aspiring after farther Degrees of Purity and Love, and so consequently always preparing yourselves for a fuller Sight and Enjoyment of that God, in whose Presence there is Fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for ever more.
Amen! Amen!

S E R M O N VII.

DIRECTIONS how to hear SERMONS.

LUKE viii. 18.

Take Heed therefore how you hear.

THE Occasion of our LORD's giving this Caution was this, Perceiving that much People were gathered together, to hear him, out of every City, and knowing (for he is GOD, and knoweth all Things) that many, if not most of them, would be Hearers only, and not Doers of the Word, he spake to them by a Parable, wherein, under the Similitude of a Sower, that went out to sow his Seed, he plainly intimated how few there were amongst them who would receive any saving Benefit from his Doctrine, or bring forth Fruit unto Perfection.

The Application, one would imagine, should be plain and obvious : But the Disciples, as yet unenlightened in any great Degree by the Holy Spirit, and therefore unable to see into the hidden Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, dealt with our Saviour, as People ought to deal with their Ministers, discoursed with him privately about

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about the Meaning of what he had taught them in Publick, and with a sincere Desire of doing their Duty, asked for an Interpretation of the Parable.

Our blessed LORD, as he always was willing to instruct those that were teachable (herein setting his Ministers an Example to be courteous and easy of Access) freely told them the Signification of it. And withal, to make them more cautious and more attentive to his Doctrine for the future, He tells them, that they were in an especial Manner to be the Light of the World, and were to proclaim on the House-Top whatsoever he told them in Secret. And as their improving the Knowledge already imparted, was the only Condition upon which more was to be given them, it therefore highly concerned them to *take heed how they heard.*

From the Context then it appears, that the Words were primarily spoken to the Apostles themselves. But because they were the Representatives of the whole Church, and 'tis to be feared out of those many thousands that flock to hear Sermons, but few comparatively speaking are effectually influenced by them; I cannot but think it very necessary to remind you of the Caution given by our LORD to his Disciples, and to exhort you with the utmost Earnestness to *take heed how you hear.*

In Prosecution of which Design I shall in the following Discourse,

- I. *First*, Prove that every one ought to take all Opportunities of hearing Sermons. And,
- II. *Secondly*, I shall lay down some Cautions
and

and Directions, in order to your hearing them with Profit and Advantage.

I. And, *First*, I am to prove that every one ought to take all Opportunities of hearing Sermons.

That there have always been particular Persons set apart by GOD to instruct and exhort his People to practise what he should require of them, is evident from many Passages of Scripture. St. *Jude* tells us, that *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam* prophesied, or preached, concerning the LORD's coming with ten thousand of his Saints to Judgment. And *Noah*, who lived not long after, is stiled by St. *Peter*, a *Preacher of Righteousness*. And though in all the intermediate Space between the Flood and Giving of the Law, we hear but of few Preachers, yet we may reasonably conclude, that GOD never left himself without Witness, but at sundry Times, and after divers Manners, spoke to our Fathers by the Patriarchs and Prophets.

But however it was before, we are assured that after the Delivery of the Law, GOD has constantly separated to himself a certain Order of Men to preach to, as well as pray for, his People; and commanded them to enquire their Duty at the Priests Mouths. And though the *Jews* were frequently led into Captivity, and for their Sins scattered abroad through the Face of the Earth, yet he never utterly forsook his Church, but still kept up a Remnant of Prophets and Preachers, as *Ezekiel*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, and others, to reprove, instruct, and call them to Repentance.

Thus

Thus was it under the Law. Nor has the Church been worse, but infinitely better provided for under the Gospel: For when JESUS CHRIST, that great High-priest, had through the Eternal Spirit offered himself as a full, perfect, sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the World, and after his Resurrection had all Power committed to him both in Heaven and Earth, he gave Commission to his Apostles, and in them to all succeeding Ministers, to go and preach his Gospel to every Creature; promising to be with them, to guide, assist, strengthen and comfort them *always, even to the End of the World.*

But if it be the Duty of Ministers to preach (and Woe be to them if they do not preach the Gospel, for a Necessity is laid upon them) no doubt, the People are obliged to attend to them; for otherwise, wherefore are Ministers sent?

And how can we here avoid admiring the Love and tender Care which our dear Redeemer has expressed for his Spouse the Church? Who, because he could not be always with us in Person, on account it was expedient he should go away, and as our Fore-runner take Possession of that Glory he had purchased by his precious Blood, yet would not leave us comfortless, but first settled a sufficient Number of Pastors and Teachers, and afterwards, according to his Promise, actually did and will continue to send down the Holy Ghost to furnish them and their Successors with proper Gifts and Graces for the Work of the Ministry, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of his Body in Love, till we all come in the Unity of the Spirit, to the Fulness of the Measure of the Stature of CHRIST.

Oh!

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Oh ! how insensible are those of this unspeakable Gift, who do despite to the Spirit of Grace, who crucify the Son of GOD afresh, and put him to an open Shame, by wilfully refusing to attend on so great a Means of their Salvation? How dreadful will the End of such Men be? How aggravating, that Light should come into the World, that the glad Tidings of Salvation should be so very frequently proclaimed in this City, and that so many should loath this spiritual Manna, this Angels Food, and call it light Bread? How much more tolerable will it be for Tyre and Sydon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for such Sinners? For better Men had never heard of a Saviour's being born, than after they have heard not to give heed to the Ministry of those, who are employed as his Ambassadors, to transact Affairs between GOD and their Souls.

We may, though at a Distance, without a Spirit of Prophecy, foretel the deplorable Condition of such Men; and behold them cast into Hell, lifting up their Eyes, being in Torment, and crying out, How often would our Ministers have gathered us, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings!—But we would not.—Oh that we had known in that our Day, the Things that belonged to our everlasting Peace!—But now they are for ever hid from our Eyes.

Thus wretched, thus inconceivably miserable, will such be as slight and make a Mock at the publick Preaching of the Gospel.—But taking it for granted, there are but few, if any, of this unhappy Stamp, who think it not worth their while to tread the Courts of the LORD's House, I pass on now to the

II. *Second*

II. *Second* general Thing proposed,—To lay down some Cautions and Directions, in order to your hearing Sermons with Profit and Advantage.

And here, if we reflect on what has been already delivered, and consider that Preaching is an Ordinance of GOD, a Means appointed by JESUS-CHRIST himself, for promoting his Kingdom amongst Men, you cannot reasonably be offended, if, in order that you may hear Sermons with Profit and Advantage, I

First, direct or intreat you to come to hear them, not out of Curiosity, but from a sincere Desire to know and do your Duty.

Formality and Hypocrisy in any religious Exercise is an Abomination unto the LORD. And to enter his House merely to have our Ears entertained, and not our Hearts reformed, must certainly be highly displeasing to the Most High GOD, as well as unprofitable to ourselves.

Hence it is, that so many remain unconverted, yea, Unaffected with the most Evangelical Preaching; so that like St. Paul's Companions, they only hear the Preacher's Voice with their outward Ears, but do not experience the Power of it inwardly in their Hearts. Or like the Ground near Gideon's Fleece, they remain untouched; whilst others that came to be fed with the sincere Milk of the Word, like the Fleece itself, are watered by the Dew of GOD's Heavenly Blessing, and grow thereby.

Flee therefore, my Brethren, flee Curiosity; and prepare your Hearts by a humble Disposition to receive with Meekness the engrafted Word,
and

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and then it will be a Means, under GOD, to quicken, build up, purify, and save your Souls.

A *Second* Direction I shall lay down for the same Purpose, is, not only to prepare your Hearts before you hear, but also to give diligent heed to the Things that are spoken, whilst you are hearing the Word of GOD.

If an earthly King was to issue out a Royal Proclamation, on performing or not performing the Conditions therein contained, the Life or Death of his Subjects entirely depended, how solicitous would they be to hear what those Conditions were? And shall not we pay the same Respect to the KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS, and lend an attentive Ear to his Embassadors, when they are declaring in his Name on what Terms our Pardon, Peace, and Happiness may be secured?

When GOD descended on Mount *Sinai* in terrible Majesty, to give unto his People the Law, how attentive were they to his Servant *Moses*? And if they were so earnest to hear the Thundrings or Threatnings of the Law, shall not we be as solicitous to hear from the Ministers of CHRIST, the glad Tidings of the Gospel?

Whilst CHRIST was himself on Earth, it is said, that the People hung upon him to hear the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth. And if we looked on Ministers as we ought, as the Representatives of JESUS CHRIST, we should hang upon them to hear their Words also.

Besides, the sacred Truths that Gospel Ministers deliver, are not dry insipid Lectures on Moral Philosophy, intended only to amuse us for a while; but the great Mysteries of Godliness,

ness, which therefore we are bound studiously to listen to, lest through our Negligence we should either not understand them, or by any other Means let them slip.

But how regardless are those of this Direction, who instead of hanging on the Preacher to hear him, doze or sleep whilst he is speaking to them from GOD? Unhappy Men! Can they not watch with our blessed LORD one Hour? What; Have they never read how *Eutichus* fell down as he was sleeping, when *St. Paul* continued his Discourse till Midnight, and was taken up dead?

But to return. Though you may prepare your Hearts, as you may think, by a teachable Disposition, and be attentive whilst Discourses are delivering, yet this will profit you little, unless you observe a

Third Direction, — not to entertain any the least Prejudice against the Minister.

For could a Preacher speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, if his Audience was prejudiced against him, he would be as a sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal.

That was the Reason why JESUS CHRIST himself, the eternal Word, could not do many mighty Works, nor preach to any great Effect among those of his own Country; for they were offended at him. And was this same JESUS, this GOD incarnate again to bow the Heavens, and to come down speaking as never Man spake; yet if we were prejudiced against him, as the *Jews* were, we should harden our Hearts as the *Jews* did theirs.

But,

But, *Fourthly*, as you ought not to be prejudiced against, so you should be careful not to depend too much on a Preacher, or think more highly of him than you ought to think. For though this be an Extreme that People seldom run into; yet preferring one godly Teacher, in Opposition to another, has been of ill Consequence to the Church of God.

That, we read, was a Fault which the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* condemned in the *Corinthians*: For whereas one said, I am of *Paul*; another, I am of *Apollos*: Are you not Carnal, says he? For who is *Paul*, and who is *Apollos*, but Instruments in God's Hand by whom you believed? And are not all godly Ministers sent forth to be ministring Ambassadors to those who shall be Heirs of Salvation? And are they not all therefore greatly to be esteemed for their Work's Sake?

The Apostle, it is true, commands us to pay double Honour to those who labour in the Word and Doctrine. But then to prefer one Minister at the Expence of the Character of another, is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Not to mention that Popularity and Applause cannot but be exceeding dangerous even to a rightly informed Mind; and must necessarily fill any thinking Man with a holy Jealousy, lest he should take that Honour to himself, which is due only to God; who alone qualifies him for his Ministerial Labours, and from whom alone every good and perfect Gift cometh.

A *Fifth* Direction I would recommend is, to make a particular Application of every Thing that is delivered, to your own Hearts.

When

When our Saviour was discoursing at his last Supper with his beloved Disciples, and foretold that one of them should betray him, each of them immediately applied it to his own Heart, and said, *LORD, Is it I?* And would Persons in like Manner, when Preachers are dissuading from any Vice, or persuading to any Virtue, instead of crying, this was designed against such and such a one, turn their Thoughts inwardly, and say, *LORD, It is I?* How far more beneficial should we find Discourses to be, than they generally are now?

But we are apt to wander too much abroad: Always looking at the Mote which is in our Neighbour's Eye, rather than the Beam which is in our own.

Haste we now to the *Sixth* and last Direction: If you would receive a Blessing from the *LORD*, when you hear his Word preached, pray to him, both before, in, and after every Sermon, to endue the Minister with Power to speak, and to grant you a Will and Ability to put in Practice what he shall shew from the Book of *GOD* to be your Duty.

This would be an excellent Means to render the Word preached effectual to the enlightning and enflaming your Hearts, and without this all the other Means before prescribed will be in vain.

No doubt it was this Consideration that made *St. Paul* so earnestly intreat his beloved *Ephesians* to intercede with *GOD* for him,—*Praying always*, says he, *with all Manner of Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit; and for me also, that I may open my Mouth with Boldness, to make known the Mysteries of the Gospel.* And if so

great an Apostle as *St. Paul*, needed the Prayers of his People, much more do those Ministers, who have only the ordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Besides, this would be a good Proof that you sincerely desired to do as well as know the Will of GOD: And it must highly profit both Ministers and People; because GOD thro' your Prayers will give them a double Portion of his Holy Spirit, whereby they will be enabled to instruct you more fully in the Things which pertain to the Kingdom of GOD.

And oh! that all that hear me this Day would seriously apply their Hearts to practise what has now been told!—How would Ministers see Satan like Lightning fall from Heaven, and People find the Word preached sharper than a two-edged Sword, and mighty through GOD to the pulling down the Devil's strong Holds!

The Holy Ghost would then fall on all them that heard the Word; as when *St. Peter* preached. The Gospel of CHRIST would have free Course, run very swiftly, and Thousands again be converted by a Sermon.

For JESUS CHRIST is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever. His All-powerful Hand is not shortned. He has promised to be with his Ministers always, even unto the End of the World.

It does indeed sometimes happen that GOD, to magnify his Free-Grace in JESUS CHRIST; is found of them that sought him not; a notorious Sinner is forcibly worked upon by a public Sermon, and plucked as a Fire-brand out of the Fire. But this is not GOD's ordinary Way of acting. No; for the Generality, he only visits those
with

with the Power of his Word, who humbly wait to know what he would have them to do. And sends unqualified Hearers not only empty, but hardened, away.

Take heed, therefore, ye careless, curious Professors, if any such be here present, how you hear. Remember that, whether we think of it or not, we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of CHRIST, where Ministers must give a strict Account of the Doctrine they have delivered, and you as strict a one, how you have improved under it. And how will you be able to stand at the Bar of an angry, Sin-avenging Judge, and see so many Discourses you have despised, so many Ministers who once longed and laboured for the Salvation of your precious and immortal Souls, brought out as so many swift Witnesses against you; Will it be sufficient then, think you, to alledge that you went to hear them only out of Curiosity, to pass away an idle Hour, to admire the Oratory, or ridicule the Simplicity of the Preacher? No, GOD will then let you know, that you ought to have come out of better Principles, that every Sermon has been put down to your Account, and that you must then be justly punished for not improving by them.

But fear not, you little Flock, who with Meekness receive the ingrafted Word, and bring forth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness; for it shall not be so with you. No; you will be your Minister's Joy, and their Crown of Rejoicing in the Day of our Lord JESUS. And they will present you in a holy Triumph faultless and unblameable to our common Redeemer, saying, Behold us, O LORD, and the Children which Thou hast given us.

But still take you heed how you hear. For upon your improving the Grace you have, more shall be given, and you shall have Abundance. For He is faithful that has promised, Who also will do it. Nay, God from out of *Heaven* shall so bless you, that every Sermon you hear shall communicate to you a fresh Supply of Spiritual Knowledge. The Word of God shall dwell in you richly; you shall go on from Strength to Strength, from one Degree of Grace unto another, till being grown up to be perfect Men in CHRIST JESUS, and filled with all the Fullness of God, you shall be translated by Death to see Him as He is, and to sing Praise before his Throne with Angels and Archangels, Cherubims and Seraphims, and the general Assembly of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven, for ever and ever.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

SERMON VIII.

The Extent and Reasonableness of SELF-DENIAL.

LUKE ix. 23.

*And he said unto them all, If any Man
will come after me, let him deny him-
self.*

WHOEVER reads the Gospel with a single Eye, and sincere Intention, will find that our blessed LORD took all Opportunities of reminding his Disciples that his Kingdom was not of this World; that his Doctrine was a Doctrine of the Cross; and that their professing themselves to be his Followers would call them to a constant State of voluntary *Self-suffering* and *Self-denial*.

The Words of the Text afford us one Instance, among many, of our Saviour's Behaviour in this Matter: For having in the preceeding Verses revealed himself to *Peter*, and the other Apostles, to be *The Christ of God*; lest they should be too much elated with such a peculiar Discovery of his Deity, or think that their Relation to so great a Personage would be attended with nothing but

Pomp and Grandeur, He tells them, in the 22d Verse, that *the Son of Man was to suffer many Things* in this World, though He was to be crowned with Eternal Glory and Honour in the next: And that if any of them or their Posterity would share in the same Honour, they must bear a Part with him in his Self-denial and Sufferings. For *He said unto them all, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself.*

From which Words I shall consider these three Things:

I. *First*, The Nature of the Self-Denial recommended in the Text; and in how many Respects we must deny ourselves, in order to come after JESUS CHRIST.

II. *Secondly*, I shall endeavour to prove the Universality and Reasonableness of this Duty of Self-Denial.

III. *Thirdly and Lastly*, I shall offer some Considerations, which may serve as so many Motives to reconcile us to, and quicken us in the Practice of this Doctrine of Self-Denial.

I. And *first* then, I am to shew the Nature of the Self-Denial recommended in the Text; or in how many Respects we must deny ourselves in order to follow JESUS CHRIST.

Now as the Faculties of the Soul are distinguished by the Understanding, Will and Affections; so in all these must each of us *deny himself*. We must not lean to our own Understanding, being wise in our own Eyes, and prudent in our own Sight; but we must submit our short-sighted Reason to the Light of Divine Revelation: For there

there are Mysteries in Religion, which are above, though not contrary to our natural Reason: And therefore we shall never become *Christians* unless we cast down Imaginations, and every high Thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of GOD, and bring into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of CHRIST. It is in this Respect, as well as others, that we must become *Fools* for CHRIST's Sake, and acknowledge we know nothing without Revelation as we ought to know. We must, with all Humility and Reverence, embrace the mysterious Truths revealed to us in the *Holy Scriptures*; for thus only can we become truly Wise, even *Wise unto Salvation*. It was Matter of our Blessed LORD's Thanksgiving to his Heavenly Father, that he had *hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and had revealed them unto Babes*. And in this Respect also we must be converted and become as little Children, teachable, and willing to follow the Lamb into whatsoever Mysteries he shall be pleased to lead us; and believe and practise all Divine Truths, not because we can demonstrate them, but because GOD, who cannot lye, has revealed them to us.

Hence then we may trace Infidelity to its Fountain Head: For it is nothing else but a Pride of the Understanding, an Unwillingness to submit to the Truths of GOD, that makes so many, professing themselves wise, to become such Fools as to deny the LORD, who has so dearly bought them; and dispute the Divinity of that Eternal Word, in whom they live, and move, and have their Being: Whereby it is justly to be feared, they will bring upon themselves sure, if not swift Destruction.

But to return: As we must deny ourselves in our Understandings, so must we deny, or, as it might be more properly rendered, *renounce* our Wills: That is, we must make our own Wills no Principle of Action, but *whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all, not merely to please ourselves, but to the Glory of GOD.* Not that we are therefore to imagine we are to have no Pleasure in any Thing we do (*Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness*) but pleasing ourselves must not be the principal, but only the subordinate End of our Actions.

And I cannot but particularly press this Doctrine upon you, because it is the Grand Secret of our Holy Religion. It is this, *my Brethren*, that distinguishes the true *Christian* from the mere Moralist and formal Professor; and without which none of our Actions are acceptable in GOD's Sight: For *if thine Eye be single*, says our Blessed LORD, *Matth. vi. 22.* that is, if thou aimest simply to please GOD, without any regard to thy own Will, *thy whole Body*, that is, all thy Actions, *will be full of Light*; agreeable to the Gospel, which is called *Light*: But *if thine Eye be evil*, if thine Intention be diverted any other Way, *thy whole Body*, all thy Actions *will be full of Darkness*, unprofitable, and capable of no Reward. For we must not only do the Will of GOD, but do it *because* it is his Will; since we pray that GOD's Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. And no doubt, the blessed Angels not only do every Thing that GOD willeth, but do it cheerfully, out of this Principle, because GOD willeth it: And if we would live as we pray, we must go and do likewise.

But

But farther; as we must renounce our own Wills in *doing*, so likewise must we renounce them in *suffering* the Will of GOD. Whatsoever befalls us, we must say with good old *Eli*, *It is the LORD, let Him do what seemeth him good*; or with one that was infinitely greater than *Eli*, *Father, not my Will, but thine be done*. — O JESU, thine was an innocent Will, and yet thou renouncedst it: Teach us, even us also, O our Saviour! to submit our Wills to thine, in all the Evils which shall be brought upon us; and in every Thing enable us to give Thanks, since it is thy blessed Will concerning us!

Thirdly and lastly, we must deny ourselves, as in our Understandings and Wills, so likewise in our Affections. More particularly we must deny ourselves the pleasurable Indulgence and Self-Enjoyment of Riches: *If any Man will come after me*, says our blessed LORD, *he must forsake all and follow me*. And again (to shew the utter Inconsistency of the Love of the Things of this World with the Love of the Father) he tells us, that *unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple*.

Far be it from me to think that these Texts are to be taken in a literal Sense, as though they obliged rich Persons to go sell all that they have and give to the Poor (for that would put it out of their Power to be serviceable to the Poor for the future) but however they certainly imply thus much, That we are to sit loose to, sell and forsake all in Affection, and be willing to part with every Thing, when GOD shall require it at our Hands; That is, as the Apostle observes, *we must use the World as though we used it not*; and tho' we are in the World, we must not be of

11. We must look upon ourselves as Stewards
 21 and not Proprietors of the manifold Gifts of
 25 God; provide first what is necessary for our-
 30 selves and for our Households, and expend the
 35 rest, not in Indulgences and superfluous Orna-
 40 ments, forbidden by the Apostle, but in cloath-
 45 ing, feeding, and relieving the naked, hungry,
 50 distressed Disciples of JESUS CHRIST. This is
 55 what our Blessed LORD would have us under-
 60 stand by *foraking all*, and in this Sense must each
 65 of us *deny himself*.

70 I am sensible that this will seem *an hard Say-*
 75 *ing* to many, who will be offended because they
 80 are covetous, and *Lovers of Pleasure more than*
 85 *Lovers of GOD*. But if I yet pleased such Men,
 90 I should not be the Servant of CHRIST. No, we
 95 must not, like *Ahab's* false Prophets, have a
 100 *lying Spirit in our Mouths*, but declare faithfully,
 105 *the whole Will of God*; and like honest *Micajah*,
 110 out of Pity and Compassion, tell Men the Truth,
 115 tho' they may falsely think *we prophecy not Good*
 120 *but Evil concerning them*.

But to proceed: As we must renounce our
 Affection for Riches, so likewise our Affections
 for our Relations when they stand in Opposition
 to our Love of, and Duty to GOD: For thus
 saith the Saviour of the World: *If any Man*
will come up after me, and hateth not his Father
and Mother, his Children, and Brethren, and
Sisters, yea and his own Life also, he cannot be
a Disciple — Strange Doctrine this! What, hate
 our own Flesh! What hate the Father that be-
 gat us, the Mother that bare us! *How can these*
Things be? Can GOD contradict himself? Has
 he not bid us honour our Father and Mother?
 and yet we are here commanded to hate them.

How

How must these Truths be reconciled? Why, by interpreting the Word *hate*, not in a rigorous and absolute Sense, but *comparatively*: Not as implying a total Alienation, but a less Degree of Affection. For thus our blessed Saviour himself (the best and surest Expofitor of his own Meaning) explains it in a parallel Text, *Matth. x. 37. He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me: He that loveth Son or Daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* So that when the Persuasions of such our Friends (as for our Trial they may be permitted to be) are contrary to the Will of GOD, we must say with *Levi*, *we have not known thee*; or agreeably to our blessed LORD's Rebuke to *Peter*, *Get you behind me, my Adversaries; for you favour not the things that be of GOD, but the Things that be of Man.*

Further, we must deny ourselves in Things indifferent: For it might easily be shewn that as many, if not more, perish by an immoderate Use of Things in themselves indifferent as by any gross Sin whatever. A prudent Christian therefore will consider not only what is *lawful* but what is *expedient* also: Not so much what degrees of *Self-denial* best suit his Inclinations here, as what will most *effectually* break his Will, and fit him for greater Degrees of *Glory* hereafter. Lastly, to conclude this Head, we must renounce our own Righteousness: For, tho' we should give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and our Bodies to be burned, yet, if we in the least depend on that, and do not wholly rely on the perfect all-sufficient Will of JESUS CHRIST, it will profit us nothing. CHRIST is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth. We are compleat in him, and him

only.

only. Our own Righteousnesses are but as filthy Rags. We must count all Things but dung, and Dross; so that we may be found in him not having our own Righteousness, but the Righteousness which is of GOD, thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

But is this the Doctrine of *Christianity*? and is not the Christian World then asleep? If not whence so much Self-Righteousness, whence the Self-indulgence, whence the reigning Love of Riches which we every where meet with? Above all, whence that predominant Greediness after sensual Pleasure, that has so over-run this sinful Nation, that was a pious Stranger to come amongst us, he would be tempted to think some Heathen *Venus* was worshipped here; and that Temples were dedicated to her Service. But we have the Authority of an inspired Apostle to affirm, that *they who live in a Round of Pleasure, are dead while they live*: Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and CHRIST shall give thee Light*. But the Power of raising the spiritual Dead becometh only unto GOD. — Do Thou therefore, O Holy Jesus, who by thy almighty Word commandest *Lazarus* to come forth, tho' he had lain in the Grave so many Days, speak also as effectually to these spiritually dead Souls, whom *Satan* for these many Years has so fast bound by sensual Pleasures, that they are not so much as able to lift up their Eyes or Hearts to Heaven.

II. But I pass on to the *Second general Thing* proposed, viz. To consider the universal Obligation,

Obligation, and Reasonableness of this Doctrine of *Self-Denial*.

When our blessed Master had been discoursing publicly concerning the Watchfulness of the faithful and wise Steward, his Disciples asked him, *Speakest thou this Parable to all, or only to us?* The same Question I am aware has been, and will be put concerning the foregoing Doctrine. For too many, unwilling to take Christ's easy Yoke upon them, in order to evade the Force of the Gospel Precepts, would pretend that all those Commands concerning *Self-denial*, renouncing ourselves and the World, belonged to our LORD's first and immediate Followers, and not to us or to our Children. But such Persons greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of Godliness in their Hearts. For the Doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, like his blessed Self, is the same Yesterday, to Day, and forever. What he said unto one, he said unto all, even unto the Ends of the World; *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself:* And in the Text it is particularly mentioned that *He said unto them all.* And lest we should still absurdly imagine that this Word *all* was to be confined to his Apostles, with whom he was then discoursing, it is said in another Place, that JESUS turned unto the Multitude and said, *If any Man will come after me, and hateth not his Father and Mother, yea and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple.* When our blessed LORD had spoken a certain Parable, it is said, *the Scribes and Pharisees were offended, for they knew the Parable was spoken against them:* And if Chri-

stians can now read these plain and positive Texts of Scripture, and at the same Time not think they are spoken of them, they are more hardened than *Jews*, and more insincere than *Pharisees*. *

In the former Part of this Discourse I observ'd that the Precepts concerning *foraking* and *selling all* did not oblige us in a literal Sense, because the State of the Church does not demand it of us, as it did of the Primitive *Christians*; but still the same Deadness to the World, the same abstemious Use of, and Readiness to part with our Goods for *CHRIST'S* Sake, is as absolutely necessary for, and as obligatory on us, as it was on them. For though the Church may differ as to the outward State of it, in different Ages, yet as to the Purity of its inward State, it was, is, and always will be invariably the same. And all the Commands which we meet with in the *Epistles*, about mortifying our Members which are upon the Earth, of setting our Affections on Things above, and of not being conformed to this World; are but so many incontestible Proofs that the same Holiness, Heavenly-mindedness, and Deadness to the World, is as necessary for us as for our *LORD'S* immediate Followers.

But farther, as such an Objection argues an Ignorance of the Scriptures, so it is a manifest Proof that such as make it are Strangers to the Power of Godliness in their Hearts. For since the Sum and Substance of Religion consists in our Recovery from our fallen Estate in *Adam*, by a *New Birth* in *CHRIST JESUS*, there is an absolute Necessity for us to embrace and practise

* *Law's Christian Perfection*

the

the *Self-denial* before spoken of. If we are alive unto God, we shall be dead to ourselves and the World. If all Things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in us, all Things belonging to the Old Man must die in us. We must mourn before we are comforted, and receive the Spirit of Bondage before we are blessed with the unspeakable Privilege of the Spirit of Adoption, and with a full Assurance of Faith can say, *Abba, Father.*

Were we indeed in a State of Innocence, and had we, like *Adam* before his Fall, the Divine Image fully stamped upon our Souls, we then should have no need of *Self-denial*; but since we are fallen, sickly, disordered, self-righteous Creatures, we must necessarily deny ourselves (shall count it our Privilege to do so) ere we can follow *JESUS CHRIST* to Glory. To reject such a salutary Practice on account of the Difficulty attending it at first, is but too like the Obstinacy of a perverse sick Child, who nauseates and refuses the Potion reached out to it by a skillful Physician or a tender Parent, because it is a little ungrateful to the Taste.

Had any of us seen *Lazarus* when he lay full of Sores at the rich Man's Gate; or *Job* when he was smitten with Ulcers, from the Crown of his Head to the Sole of his Foot: And had we at the same Time prescribed to them some healing Medicines, which, because they would put them to Pain, they would not apply to their Wounds, should we not most justly think, that they were either fond of a distempered Body, or were not sensible of their Distempers? But our Souls, by Nature, are in an infinitely more deplorable Condition than the Bodies of *Job*

or

or Lazarus, when full of Ulcers and Boils: For, alas! our whole Head is sick, and our whole Heart faint, from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot, we are full of Wounds and Bruises, and putrifying Sores, and there is no Health in us. And if we are unwilling to deny ourselves, and come after JESUS CHRIST in order to be cured, it is a Sign we are not sensible of the Wretchedness of our State, and that we are not truly to be made whole. *CHRISTUS VOV*

Even Naaman's Servants could say, when he refused, pursuant to Elisha's Orders to wash in the River Jordan, that he might cure his Leprosy, Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great Thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean? And may not I very properly address myself to you in the same Manner, my Brethren?—If JESUS CHRIST, our great Prophet, had bid you to do some far more difficult Thing, would you not have done it? Much more then should you do it, when he only bids you deny yourselves what would certainly hurt you if indulged in, and He will give you a Crown of Life.

But to illustrate this by another Comparison: In the 12th Chapter of the Acts, we read, that St. Peter was kept in Prison, and was sleeping between two Soldiers, bound with two Chains: And behold an Angel of the LORD came upon him, and smote Peter on the Side, saying, Arise up quickly: And his Chains fell off from his Hands. But had this great Apostle, instead of rising up quickly, and doing as the blessed Angel commanded him, hugged his Chains and begged that they might not be let fall from his Hands, would not any one think that he was in

love with Slavery, and deserved to be *executed* next Morning? And does not the Person who refuses to *deny himself*, act as inconsistently as this Apostle would have done if he had neglected the Means of his Deliverance? For our Souls, by Nature, are in a spiritual Dungeon, sleeping and fast bound between the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, not with Two but Ten Thousand Chains of Lusts and Corruptions. Now JESUS CHRIST, like St. Peter's good Angel, by the Power of his Gospel comes and opens the Prison Door, bids us Deny our selves and follow him. But if we do not arise, gird up the Loins of our Mind and follow him, are we not in Love with Bondage, and do we not deserve never to be delivered from it?

Indeed I will not affirm that this Doctrine of *Self-denial* appears in this just Light to every one. No, I am sensible that to the *Natural Man* it is *Foolishness*, and to the young Convert an *hard Saying*. But what says our Saviour? *If any Man will do my Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of myself.* This, my dear Friends, is the best, the only Way of Conviction: Let us up and be doing; let us arise quickly, and *deny ourselves*, and the LORD JESUS will remove those Scales from the Eyes of our Minds, which now, like so many Veils, hinder us from seeing clearly the Reasonableness, Necessity, and inexpressible Advantage of the Doctrine that has been now delivered. Let us but once thus *show ourselves Men*, and then the Spirit of GOD will move on the Face of our Souls, as he did once upon the Face of the great Deep; and cause them to emerge out of that confused Chaos, in which they are most certainly

certainly now involved, if we are Strangers and Enemies to *Self-denial* and the *Cross of Christ*.

III. Proceed we therefore now to the *Third* and *last* general Thing proposed, viz. To offer some Considerations, which may serve as so many Motives to reconcile us to, and *quicken us* in the Practice of this Duty of *Self-denial*.

1. And the first Means I shall recommend to you, in order to reconcile you to this Doctrine, is, to meditate frequently on the Life of our blessed Lord and Master JESUS CHRIST. Follow him from his Cradle to the Cross, and see what a *self-denying Life* He led! And shall not we drink of the Cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the Baptism that He was baptized with? Or think we that JESUS CHRIST did and suffered every Thing in order to have us excused and exempted from Sufferings? No, far be it from any sincere *Christian* to judge after this Manner: For St. Peter tells us, *He suffered for us, leaving us an Example that we should follow his Steps*. Had CHRIST, indeed, like those that sat in *Moses's Chair*, laid heavy Burthens of *Self-denial* upon us, (supposing they were heavy, which they are not) and refused to touch them himself with one of his Fingers; we might have had some Pretence to complain: But since he has enjoined us nothing but what he has first put in Practice himself, *Thou art inexcusable, O Disciple, whoever thou art, who wouldst be above thy persecuted self-denying Master*: And thou art no good and faithful Servant, who art unwilling

willing to suffer and sympathize with thy mortified, heavenly-minded LORD.

2. Next to the Pattern of our blessed Master, think often on the Lives of the glorious Company of the *Apostles*, the goodly Fellowship of the *Prophets*, and the noble Army of *Martyrs*; who by a constant looking to the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*; have fought the good Fight, and are gone before us to inherit the *Promises*. View again and again, how holily, how self-denyingly, how unblameably they lived: And if *Self-denial* was necessary for them, why not for us also? Are we not Men of like Passions with them? Do we not live in the same wicked World as they did? Have we not the same good Spirit to assist, support, and purify us, as they had? And is not the same eternal Inheritance reached out, as was to them? And if we have the same Nature to change, the same wicked World to withstand, the same good Spirit to help, and the same Eternal Crown at the End; why should not we lead the same Lives as they did? Do we think they did Works of Supererogation? If not, why don't we do as they did? Or why does your own Church set apart Festivals to commemorate the Deaths and Sufferings of the Saints, but in order to excite you to follow them as they did CHRIST.

3. Thirdly, Think often on the Pains of Hell; Consider, whether it is not better to cut off a Right Hand or Foot, and pull out a Right Eye, if they offend us (or cause us to sin) rather than to be cast into Hell, into the Fire that never shall be quenched; where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched. Think how many Thousands there are now reserved with damned Spi-

rits

rits in Chains of Darknes unto the Judgment of the great Day. And think withal that this, this must be our Case shortly, unless we are wise in Time, deny ourselves, and follow JESUS CHRIST. Think you they now imagine JESUS CHRIST to be an hard Master; or rather think you not they would give ten thousand Times ten thousand Worlds, could they but return to Life again, and take CHRIST's easy Yoke upon them? And can we dwell with everlasting Burnings more than *they*? No, if we cannot bear this Precept, *Come, deny yourselves, take up your Crosses*; how shall we bear this irrevocable Sentence, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*? But I hope those, amongst whom I am now preaching the Kingdom of God, are not so disingenuous as to need to be driven to their Duty by the Terrors of the LORD, but rather desire to be drawn by the Cords of Love.

Lastly therefore, and to conclude, often meditate on the Joys of Heaven: Think, think with what unspeakable Glory those happy Souls are now incircled, who when on Earth were called to *deny themselves* as well as we, and were not disobedient to that Call: Lift up your Hearts frequently towards the Mansions of eternal Bliss, and with an Eye of Faith, like the great St. Stephen, see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man with his glorious Retinue of departed Saints sitting and solacing themselves in eternal Joys. Hark! methinks I hear them chanting forth their everlasting *Hallelujahs*, and spending an eternal Day in ecchoing forth triumphant Songs of Joy. And do you not long, my Brethren, to join this heavenly Choir? Do not your Hearts
burn

burn within you? *As the Hari panteth after the Water Brooks,* do not your Souls *so long after the blessed Company of these Sons of GOD?* Behold then a heavenly Ladder reached down to you, by which you may climb to this Holy Hill. Let us believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and deny ourselves. By this alone every Saint that ever lived *ascended into the Joy of their LORD:* And then we, even we also shall ere long be lifted up into the same most blissful Regions, there to enjoy an eternal Rest with the People of GOD, and join with them in singing *Doxologies and Songs of Praise,* to the Everlasting, Blessed, All-glorious, most Adorable Trinity, for ever and ever.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

S E R M O N IX.

On EARLY PIETY.

Eccl. xii. I.

*Remember now thy Creator in the Days
of thy Youth.*

THE Amiableness of Religion in itself, the innumerable Advantages that flow from it to Society in general, as well as each sincere Professor of it in particular, cannot but recommend it to the Choice of every considerate Person, and make even wicked Men, as they wish to die the Death, so, in their more sober Intervals, envy the Life of the Righteous. And indeed we must do the World so much Justice as to confess, that the Question about Religion does not usually arise from a Dispute whether it be necessary or not (for most Men see the Necessity of doing something for the Salvation of their Souls) but when is the best Time to set about it. Persons are convinced by universal Experience, that the first Essays or Endeavours towards the Attainment of Religion are attended with some Difficulty and Trouble, and therefore they would willingly defer the Beginning such a
seem-

seemingly ungrateful Work as long as they can. The wanton Prodigal, that is spending his Substance in riotous Living cries, A little more Pleasure, a little more Sensuality, and then I'll be sober in Earnest. The covetous Worldling, that employs all his Care and Pains in *heaping up Riches, tho' he cannot tell who shall gather them*, does not flatter himself that this will do always; but hopes, with the rich Fool in the Gospel, to lay up Goods for a few more Years on Earth, and then he'll begin to lay out Treasures in Heaven. And, in short, thus it is that most People are convinced of the Necessity of being religious some Time or another; but then, like *Felix*, they put off the acting suitably to their Convictions, till (as they imagine) a more convenient Season: Whereas, would we be so humble as to be guided by the Experience and Counsel of the wisest of Men, we should learn that Youth is the fittest Season for Religion; *Remember now thy Creator*, says Solomon, *in the Days of thy Youth*. By which Word remember, we are not to understand a bare speculative Remembrance, or calling to Mind, (for that, like a dead Faith, will profit us nothing) but such a Remembrance as will constrain us to Obedience, and oblige us out of Gratitude to perform all that the LORD our GOD shall require of us. For as forgetting GOD, in Scripture Language, implies a total Neglect of our Duty, in like Manner remembering him signifies a due Performance of it: So that, when Solomon says, *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth*, it is the same as if he had said, Keep GOD's Commandments, or in other Words: Be religious in the Days

Days of thy Youth; thereby implying that Youth is the most proper Season for it.

I shall in the following Discourse, *First*, endeavour to make good the Wise Man's Proposition imply'd in the Words of the Text, and shew that Youth is the fittest Season for Religion.

Secondly, By way of Motive, I shall consider the many unspeakable Advantages that will arise from remembering our Creator in the Days of our Youth.

Thirdly, and *Lastly*, I shall conclude with a Word or two of Exhortation to the younger Part of this Audience.

And *First* then, I am to make good the Wise Man's Proposition implied in the Words of the Text, and to shew that Youth is the fittest Season for Religion: *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.*—But in Order to proceed more clearly in this Argument, it may not be improper, first, to explain what I mean by the Word *Religion*. By this Term, then, I would not be understood to mean a bare outward Profession or naming the Name of CHRIST; for we are told that many that have even prophesied in his Name, and in his Name cast out Devils, shall notwithstanding be rejected by him at the last Day: Nor would I understand by it barely being admitted into CHRIST's Church by Baptism; for then *Simon Magus*, *Arius*, and the Heresiarchs of old might pass for religious Persons, for these were baptized; nor indeed do I mean or any all of these considered by themselves; but coming to Christ as lost undone Sinners to be cloathed in
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his Righteousness having a thorough, real, inward Change of Nature, wrought in us by the powerful Operation of the Holy Ghost, convey'd to and nourished in our Hearts, by a constant use of all the Means of Grace, evidenced by a good Life, and bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.

The attaining this real, inward Religion, is a Work of so great Difficulty, that *Nicodemus*, a learned Doctor and Teacher of *Israel*, thought it altogether impossible, and therefore ignorantly asked our Blessed LORD, *how this Thing could be?* And truly to rectify a disordered Nature, to mortify our corrupt Passions, to turn Darkness to Light, to put off the old Man, and put on the new, and thereby to have the Image of GOD reinstancp'd upon the Soul, or in one Word, to *be-born again*, however light some may make of it, must, after all our Endeavours, be own'd by Man impossible. 'Tis true, indeed, CHRIST's Yoke is said to be an easy or a gracious Yoke, and his Burthen light; but then it is to those only who have been accustomed to bear and draw in it. For, as the wise Son of *Sirach* observes, *At first Wisdom walketh with her Children in crooked Ways, and brings them into Fear; and torments them with her Discipline, and does not turn to comfort and rejoice them, till she has try'd them and proved their Judgment.*—No; we must not flatter ourselves, that our depraved Natures can be renewed, unless we submit to a great many Difficulties. The spiritual Birth is attended with its Pangs, as well as the natural: And they that have experienced it (and they only are the proper Judges) can acquaint you so.

But if *these Things are so*; if there are Difficulties and Pangs attending our being born again, and

and Discipline must be called in, what Season more proper than that of Youth; when, if ever, our Bodies are robust and vigorous, and our Minds active and courageous, and consequently we are then the best qualified to endure Hardness as good Soldiers of JESUS CHRIST.

We find in secular Matters People commonly observe this Method, and send their Children abroad among the Toils and Fatigues of Business, in their younger Years, as well knowing they are then fittest to undergo them. And why do they not act with the same Consistency in the grand Affair of Religion? Because, as our Saviour has told us, *the Children of this World are wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light.*

But, Secondly, if pure Religion and undefiled consists in the total Renewal of our corrupted Natures, then 'tis not only a Work of Difficulty, but of Time: For tho' the Seed of eternal Life may be instantaneously sown in our Hearts, yet as the old was not, so neither is the new Creation compleated in a Day. No, good Men know, by certain Experience, that the strong Man arm'd has gotten too great Possession of their Hearts to be quickly entirely driven out, and they are oblig'd to combat many a weary Hour, e'er their Corruptions, which is the Armour in which the strong Man trusted, be wholly taken from him. Nay, they find their whole Lives short enough to perfect the Work of Regeneration, which they were sent into the World to do, and never expect to say 'tis finished, till with their blessed Master, they bow down their Heads, and give up the Ghost.

And if this be the Case, if the Renovation of our Nature be not only difficult, but requires so long

long a Space to compleat it in ; then, it highly concerns every one to set about it betimes, and to *work their Work while it is Day, before the Night cometh, when no Man can work.*

Could we, indeed, live to the Age of *Methuselah*, and had but little Business to employ ourselves in, we might then be more excusable, if we made no other Use of this World, than, what too many do, *take our Pastime therein*; but since our Lives are so very short, and the working out our Salvation requires so much Time, we have no Room left for trifling, lest we should be snatched away while our Lamps are untrimmed, and we are entirely unprepared to meet the Bridegroom.

Did we know a Friend or Neighbour, who had a long Journey of the utmost Importance to make, and yet should stand *all the Day idle*, neglecting to set out till the Sun was about to go down, we could not but pity and condemn his egregious Folly : And yet it is to be feared most Men are just such Fools ; they have a long Journey to take, nay, a Journey to Eternity, a Journey of infinite Importance, and which they are obliged to dispatch before the Sun of their natural Life be gone down ; and yet they loiter away their Time allotted them to perform their Journey in, till Sickness or Death surprises them ; and then they cry out, *What shall we do to inherit eternal Life ?* But, alas ! is this a proper Season to ask such a Question ? Is this a Time to *begin* their Journey, when they should be at the *End* of it ? or to enquire what they must do, when perhaps they have hardly any Strength or Ability left to do any Thing to the Purpose ? They should be waiting with humble Patience,

in hopes of speedily receiving their Wages for Work already done? *O foolish People and unwise! If you offer the Blind for Sacrifice, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy Governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person? saith the LORD of Hosts.* But leaving such to the Mercies of GOD, I pass on to

II. The Second general Thing proposed, *viz.* To shew the Advantages that will arise from *Remembring our Creator in the Days of our Youth*; which may serve as so many Motives to excite and quicken all Persons immediately to set about it.

And the *first* Benefit resulting from thence is, that it will bring most Honour and Glory to GOD. This, I suppose, every serious Person will grant, ought to be the Point in which all our Actions should centre; for to this End were we born; to this End were we redeemed by the precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST, that we should promote GOD's Eternal Glory. And as the Glory of GOD is most advanced by paying Obedience to his Precepts, they that begin soonest to walk in his Ways, act most to his Glory: For the common Objection against the divine Laws in general, and the Doctrines of the Gospel in particular, is, that they are not practicable, that they are contrary to Flesh and Blood, and that all those Precepts concerning Self-Denial, Renunciation of and Deadness to the World, are but so many arbitrary Restraints imposed upon human Nature. But when we see mere Stripplings not only practising, but delighting in such religious Duties, and in the Days of their Youth, when,

when, if ever, they have a Relish for sensual Pleasures, thro' the Power of Divine Grace, subduing and despising the *Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life.* — This, this is acceptable with GOD; this vindicates his injured Honour; this shews that his Service is perfect Freedom, *that his Yoke is easy, and his Burden light.*

But, *Secondly*, as an early Piety redounds most to the Honour of GOD, so it will bring most Honour to ourselves: For those that honour GOD, GOD will honour. We find it therefore remark'd to the Praise of *Obadiah*, that he served the LORD from his Youth: Of *Samuel*, that he stood, when young, before GOD in a Linnen Ephod: Of *Timothy*, that from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures: Of St. *John*, that he was the youngest and most beloved Disciple; and of our blessed LORD himself, that at twelve Years old he went up to the Temple, and sat among the Doctors, both hearing and asking them Questions.

Nor, *Thirdly*, will an early Piety afford us less Comfort than Honour, not only because it renders Religion habitual to us, but also because it gives us a well-grounded Assurance of the Sincerity of our Professions. Was there no other Argument against a Death-bed Repentance but the Unsatisfactoriness and Anxiety of such a State, that would be sufficient to deter all thinking Persons from deferring the most important Business of their Life to such a dreadful Period of it. For supposing a Man be sincere in his Professions of Repentance on a Death-bed (which is very much to be doubted) yet he can take no

great Comfort in them, because he is uncertain whether his Convictions and Remorse proceed from a true Sorrow for Sin, or a servile Fear of Punishment. But a young Saint need fear no such Perplexity; he knows that he loves God for his own Sake, and is not driven to him by a Dread of impending Evil: He does not decline the Gratifications of Sense, because he can no longer bear *the Voice of Singing-Men and Singing-Women*; but willingly takes up his Cross, and follows his blessed Master in his Youth; and therefore must have great Confidence of his Sincerity towards God. But farther, as an early Piety shews the Heart its Sincerity, so likewise it brings its present Reward with it, as it renders Religion, and all its Duties, habitual and easy. A young Saint, was you to ask him, would joyfully tell you the unspeakable Comfort of beginning to be good betimes: As for his Part, he knows not what Men mean by talking of Mortification, Self-Denial, and Retirement, as hard and rigorous Duties; and he takes infinitely more Pleasure in practising the severest Precepts of the Gospel, than a luxurious *Dives* in a Bed of State, or an ambitious *Haman* at a Royal Banquet. And, oh! how happy must that Youth be, whose Duty is become a second Nature, and to whom those Things, which seem terrible to others, are grown both easy and delightful!

But the greatest Advantage of an early Piety is still behind, *viz.* That it lays in the best Provision of Comfort and Support against such Times as we shall stand most in Need thereof, *viz.* all Times of our Tribulation, and in particular against

against the Time of old Age, the Hour of Death and the Day of Judgment.

This is the Argument the Wise Man makes Use of in the Words immediately following the Text: *Remember now*, says he, *thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, wherein thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them.* Observe the Time of old Age is an evil Time, Years wherein there is no Pleasure; and ask those that are grown old, and they will inform you so. Cordials surely then must be exceeding proper to support our drooping Spirits: And oh! What Cordial comparable to the grateful Review of a well-spent Life? When the Eyes, like *Isaac's*, are grown dim with Age; when *the Keepers of the House*, i. e. the Hands, shall tremble; as the wise Man goes on to describe the Infirmities of old Age; when *the strong Men bow themselves*, i. e. when the Legs grow feeble; and *the Grinders*, i. e. the Teeth, shall cease to do their proper Office, because they are few; for a Person then to be enabled to say, I was cloathed in CHRIST's Righteousness, and remembered my dear Redeemer in the Days of my Youth: This must fill him with such unspeakable Comfort, that I want Words to express, and Thoughts to conceive it.—But, supposing it was possible for us to escape the Inconveniences of old Age, yet still Death is a Debt we all must pay; and what is worse, it generally comes attended with such dreadful Circumstances, that it will make even a *Felix* tremble. But as for the Godly, that have served the LORD from their Youth, it is not so with them; no, they look upon Death not as a *King of Terrors*, but as a welcome Messenger, that is

come to conduct them to their wish'd-for Home. All the Days of their appointed Time have they waited, and it has been the Business of their whole Lives to prepare themselves for the coming of their great Change; and therefore they rejoice to hear, that they are called to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. Thus die the early Pious; whose *whose Path has been as the shining Light that shineth more and more, unto the perfect Day.* But follow him beyond the Grave, and see with what an holy Triumph he enters into his Master's Joy; with what an humble Boldness he stands at the dreadful Tribunal of JESUS CHRIST; and can you then forbear to cry out, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my latter End, and future State, be like his?*

Need I then, after having shewn so many Advantages to arise from an early Piety, use any more Arguments to persuade the younger Part of this Audience, to whom in the Third and last Place I address myself, to *remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth?*

What! will not a Desire of bringing Glory to GOD, Honour and Comfort to themselves; will not the Pleasure of an habitual Piety, and the comfortable Assurance of being sincere; above all, will not the Hopes of an honourable old Age, a peaceful Death, and a glorious Appearance at the tremendous Day of Judgment; will not these, I say, prevail with them to leave their Husks, and return home to eat of the fatted Calf? What will they thus requite their Saviour's Love? That be far from them! Did he come down and shed his *precious Blood* to deliver them from the Power of Sin; and will they spend their youthful Strength and Vigour in the Service

vice of it, and *then* think to serve CHRIST, when they can follow their Lusts no longer? Is it fit, that many who are endow'd with excellent Gifts, and are thereby qualified to be Supports and Ornaments of our sinking Church, should forget the GOD that gave them, and employ them in Things that will not profit? O why will they not arise, and, like so many *Phineas's*, be zealous for the Lord of Hosts? Doubtless, when Death overtakes them, they will wish they had: And what hinders them, but that they may live as well now, as they will wish they had when they leave the World? Think you that any one yet ever repented that they began to be good too soon? But how many, on the contrary, have repented that they began to be good too late? May we not well imagine, that young *Samuel* now rejoices that he waited so soon at the Tabernacle of the LORD? Or young *Timothy*, that from a Child he knew the Holy Scriptures? And if you wish to be Partakers of their Joy, let me persuade you to seek after their Piety.

I could still go on to fill my Mouth with Arguments; but the Circumstances and Piety of those amongst whom *I am now preaching the Kingdom of God*, remind me to change my Style; and instead of urging any more Disfluasives from Sin, to fill up what is behind of this Discourse, with Encouragements to persevere in Holiness.

Blessed, for ever blessed be GOD and the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST! I am not speaking to Persons inflamed with youthful Lusts, but to a Multitude of young Professors, who, by frequently assembling together, and forming themselves into religious Societies, are in a ready Way

to be of the Number of those young Men who have overcome the wicked one.

Believe me, it gladdens my very Soul, to see so many of your Faces set heavenwards; and the visible happy Effects of your uniting together, cannot but rejoice the Hearts of all sincere Christians, and oblige them to *wish you good Luck in the Name of the LORD*. The many Souls that are nourished weekly at the Sacrament by your Means; the weekly and monthly Lectures that are preached by your Contributions; the daily Incense of Thanksgiving and Prayer which is publickly sent up to the Throne of Grace by your Subscriptions; the many Children which are trained up in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD, by your Charities; and lastly the commendable and pious Zeal you exert in promoting and encouraging divine Psalmody, are such plain and apparent Proofs of the Benefit of your Religious Societies, that they call for a publick Acknowledgement of Praise and Thanksgiving to our blessed Master, who has not only put into your Hearts such good Designs, but enabled you also to bring the same to good Effect.

It is true, it has been objected, 'That young Mens forming themselves into Religious Societies has a Tendency to make them spiritually proud, and think more *highly of themselves than they ought to think*.' And perhaps the imprudent imperious Behaviour of some Novices in Religion, who, *though they went out from you, were not of you*, may have given too much Occasion for such an Aspersion.

But you, Brethren, have not so learned CHRIST. Far, far be it from you to look upon yourselves

as righteous, and despise others, because you often assemble yourselves together. No, this, instead of creating Pride, ought to beget an holy Fear in your Hearts, lest your Practice should not correspond with your Profession, and that, after you have benefited and edified others, you yourselves should become Cast-aways.

Worldly-mindedness, *my Brethren*, is another Rock against which we are in Danger of splitting. For, if other Sins have slain their Thousands of professing Christians, this has slain its ten Thousands. I need not appeal to past Ages; your own Experience, no doubt, has furnish'd you with many unhappy Instances of young Men who, after (as one would have imagin'd) they had escaped *Pollutions which are in the World thro' Lust*, and *had tasted the good Word of Life*, and *endured for a Season*, whilst under the Tuition and Inspection of others; yet when they have come to be their own Masters, thro' a Want of Faith, and thro' too great an Earnestness in labouring *for the Meat that perished*, have cast off their first Love, been again entangled with the World, and *returned like a Dog to his Vomit*, and *like the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the Mire*. You would therefore do well, *my Brethren*, frequently to remind each other of this dangerous Snare, and to exhort one another to begin, pursue, and end your Christian Warfare, in a thorough Renunciation of the World, and worldly Tempers; so that, when you are obliged by Providence to provide for yourselves, and those of your respective Households, you may continue to walk by Faith, and still *seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*; not doubting but *all other Things*, upon

your honest Industry and Endeavours, shall be added unto you.

And now, *What shall I say more?* To speak unto you, Fathers, who have been in CHRIST so many Years before me, and know the Malignity of Worldly-mindedness, and Pride in the Spiritual Life, would be altogether needless. To you, therefore, O young Men (for whom I am distressed, for whom I fear as well as for myself) do I once more address myself in the Words of the beloved Disciple, look to yourselves, that we lose not those Things which we have wrought, but receive a full Reward. Be ever mindful, then, of the Words that have been spoken to us by the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure. Beware, lest ye also being led away by the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Stedfastness. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take Heed lest he fall. Be not high-minded, but fear. But we are perswaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, tho' we thus speak. For GOD is not unrighteous, to forget your Works and Labours of Love. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End: That ye be not slothful, but Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises. 'Tis true, we have many Difficulties to encounter, many powerful Enemies to overcome, e'er we can get Possession of the promis'd Land. We have an artful Devil, an ensnaring World, and above all, the Treachery of our own Hearts, to withstand and strive against. For strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth unto eternal Life. But wherefore should we fear?

since he that is with us is far more powerful than all who are against us. Have we not already experienced his Almighty Power, in enabling us to conquer some Difficulties which seemed as insurmountable then, as those we struggle with now? And cannot he who delivered us out of the Paws of those Bears and Lions, preserve us also from being hurt by the strongest Goliaths?

Be steadfast therefore, my Brethren, be immovable. Consider the infinite future Rewards as well as present Comforts that attend an *early Piety*. Be not *ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST*: For it is the Power of GOD unto Salvation. Fear not Man; fear not the Contempt and Revilings which you must meet with in the Way of Duty: For *one of you shall chase a Thousand; and two of you put Ten Thousand of your Enemies to Flight.* And if you will be content to be abus'd for a short Time here, *I speak the Truth in CHRIST, I lye not*; then shall ye be exalted to sit down with the SON of Man, when he shall come in the Glory of his FATHER, with his holy Angels to Judgment hereafter. May Almighty GOD give every one of us such a Measure of his Grace, that we may not be of the Number of those that draw back unto Perdition, but of them that believe and endure unto the End, to the Saving of our Souls.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

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S E R M O N X.

The Great Duty of FAMILY-RELIGION.

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

*As for me and my House, we will serve
the LORD.*

THESE Words contain the holy Resolution of pious *Joshua*, who having in a most moving, affectionate Discourse recounted to the *Israelites* what great Things GOD had done for them, in the Verse immediately going before the Text, comes to draw a proper Inference from what he had been delivering; and acquaints them, in the most pressing Terms, that since GOD had been so exceeding gracious unto them, they could do no less than out of Gratitude for such uncommon Favours and Mercies, dedicate both themselves and Families to his Service. Now therefore, says he, Verse 14. *fear the Lord, and serve him in Sincerity and Truth, and put away the Gods which your Fathers served on the other Side of the Flood.* And by the same engaging

gaging Motive does the Prophet *Samuel* afterwards enforce their Obedience to the Commandments of God, 1 Sam. xii. 24. *Only fear the LORD, and serve him in Truth, with all your Heart; For consider* (says he) *how great Things he hath done for you.* But then, that they might not excuse themselves (as too many might be apt to do) by his giving them a bad Example, or think he was laying heavy Burdens upon them, whilst he himself touched them not with one of his Fingers, he tells them in the Verse out of which the Text is taken, that whatever Regard they might pay to the Doctrine he had been preaching, yet he (as all Ministers ought to do) was resolved to live up to and practise it himself: *Chuse you therefore, says he, whom you will serve, whether the God which your Fathers served, or the Gods of the Amorites, in whose Land ye dwell: But as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.*

A Resolution this worthy of *Joshua*, and no less becoming, no less necessary for every true Son of *Joshua*, that is intrusted with the Care and Government of a Family in our Day: And, if it was ever seasonable for Ministers to preach up, or People to put in Practice *Family Religion*, it was never more so than in the present Age; since it is greatly to be feared, that out of those many Households that call themselves *Christians*, there are but few that serve God in their respective Families as they ought.

It is true indeed, visit our Churches, and you may perhaps see something of the *Form of Godliness* still subsisting among us; but even That is scarcely to be met with in private Houses. So that were the blessed Angels to come, as in the
patri-

patriarchal Age, and observe our spiritual Economy at Home, would they not be tempted to say as *Abraham* said to *Abimelech*, Surely, the Fear of GOD is not in this Place? *Genesis* xx. 11.

How such a general Neglect of *Family-Religion* first began to overspread the *Christian World*, is difficult to determine. As for the primitive *Christians*, I am positive it was not so with them: No, they had not so learned *CHRIST*, as falsely to imagine Religion was to be confined solely to their Assemblies for publick Worship; but on the contrary, behaved with such Piety and exemplary Holiness in their private Families, that *St. Paul* often stiles their House a Church: Salute such a One, says he, and the Church which is in his House. And, I believe, we must for ever despair of seeing a primitive Spirit of Piety revived in the World, till we are so happy as to see a Revival of primitive *Family-Religion*; and Persons unanimously resolving with good old *Joshua*, in the Words of the Text, *As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.*

From which Words I shall beg Leave to insist on these Three Things:

I. *First*, That it is the Duty of every Governor of a Family to take Care, that not only he himself, but also that those committed to his Charge, serve the LORD.

II. *Secondly*, I shall endeavour to shew after what Manner a Governor and his Household ought to serve the LORD.

III. *Thirdly*, and lastly, I shall offer some Motives in order to excite all Governors, with their respective Households, to serve the

the LORD in the Manner that shall be recommended.

And *First*, I am to shew that it is the Duty of every Governor of a Family to take Care, that not only he himself, but also that those committed to his Charge, should *serve the LORD*.

And this will appear, if we consider that every Governor of a Family ought to look upon himself as obliged to act in three Capacities: As a Prophet, to instruct; as a Priest, to pray for and with; as a King, to govern, direct, and provide for those of their Households. It is true indeed the latter of these, *viz.* their kingly Office, they are not so frequently deficient in (nay in this they are generally too sollicitous) but as for the two former, *viz.* their priestly and prophetick Office, like *Gallio*, they care for no such Things. But however indifferent some Governors may be about it, yet they may be assured, that GOD will require a due Discharge of each of these Offices at their Hands. For if, as the Apostle argues, *He that does not provide for his own House, in temporal Things, has denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel*; to what greater Degree of Apostacy must he have arrived, who takes no Thought to provide for the spiritual Welfare of his Family?

But farther, Persons are generally very liberal of their Invectives against the *Clergy*, and think they justly blame the Conduct of that Minister who does not take heed to and watch over the Flock, of which the *Holy Ghost* has made him Overseer: But may not every Governor of a Family be in a lower Degree, liable to the same Censure, who takes no Thought for those Souls that

that are committed to his Charge? For every House is as it were a little Parish, every Governor (as was before observed) a Priest, every Family a Flock: And if any of them perish through the Governor's Neglect, their Blood will GOD require at their Hands.

Was a Minister to disregard teaching his People publickly, and from House to House, and to excuse himself by saying, that he had enough to do to work out his own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, without concerning himself with that of others; would not any one be apt to think such a Minister to be like the unjust Judge, *One that neither feared GOD, nor regarded Man?* And yet, odious as such a Character would be, it is no worse than that Governor of a Family deserves, who thinks himself obliged only to save his own Soul, without paying any Regard to the Souls of his Household. For (as was before hinted) every House is as it were, a Parish, and every Master is concerned to secure, as much as in him lies, the Spiritual Prosperity of every one under his Roof, as any Minister whatever is obliged to look to the spiritual Welfare of every individual Person under his Charge.

What Precedents Men, who neglect their Duty in this particular, can plead for such Omission, I cannot tell: Doubtless not the Example of holy *Job*, who was so far from imagining that he had no Concern, as Governor of a Family, with any one's Soul but his own, that the Scripture acquaints us, *When the Days of his Children's Feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and offered Burnt Offerings according to the Number of them all; for*
Job

Job said, *it may be that my Sons have sinned and cursed GOD in their Hearts: Thus did Job continually.* Nor can they plead the Practice of good old *Josbua*, whom, in the Text, we find as much concerned for his Household's Welfare as his own. Nor lastly, that of *Cornelius*, who *feared GOD*, not only himself, but with *all his House*: And were *Christians* but of the same Spirit of *Job*, *Josbua*, and the *Gentile Centurion*, they would act as *Job*, *Josbaa*, and *Cornelius* did.

But, alas! if this be the Case, and all Governors of Families ought not only to serve the LORD themselves, but likewise to see that their respective Households do so too; what will then become of those who not only neglect serving GOD themselves, but also make it their Business to ridicule and scoff at any of their House that do? Who are not content with *not entering into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves*; but *those also that are willing to enter in, they hinder*. Surely such Men are Factors for the Devil indeed. Surely their Damnation slumbereth not: For altho' GOD, in his good Providence, may suffer such *Stumbling-blocks* to be put in his Children's Ways, and suffer their greatest Enemies to be those of their own Households, for a Trial of their Sincerity, and Improvement of their Faith; yet we cannot but pronounce a *Woe* against those Masters by whom such Offences come. For if those that only take Care of their own Souls can scarcely be saved, where will such monstrous, profane, and wicked Governors appear?

But hoping there are but few of this unhappy Stamp, proceed we now to the

II. *Second Thing* proposed, viz. To shew after what Manner a Governor and his Household ought to serve the LORD.

I. And the *first Thing* I shall mention is reading the Word of GOD. This is a Duty incumbent on every private Person. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life*, is a Precept given by our blessed Lord indifferently to all: But much more so ought every Governor of a Family to think it in a peculiar Manner spoken to himself; because (as hath been already proved) he ought to look upon himself as a Prophet, and therefore, agreeably to such a Character, as bound to instruct those under his Charge in the Knowledge of the Word of God.

This we find was the Order God gave his peculiar People of *Israel*: For thus speaks his Representative *Moses*, *Deuteronomy vi. 6, 7. These Words, that is, the Scripture-Words, which I command thee this Day, shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, that is, as it is generally explained, Servants, as well as Children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thy House.* From whence we may infer, that the only Reason, why so many neglect to read the Words of Scripture diligently to their Children is, because the Words of Scripture are not in their Hearts: For if they were, out of the Abundance of the Heart their Mouth would speak. Besides, Servants as well as Children are, for the Generality, very ignorant, and mere Novices in the Laws of God: And how shall they know, unless some one teach them? And what more

more proper to teach them by, than the lively Oracles of GOD, *which are able to make them wise unto Salvation?* And who more proper to instruct them by these lively Oracles, than Parents and Masters, who (as hath been more than once observed) are as much concerned to feed them with spiritual as with bodily Bread, Day by Day.

But if these Things be so, what a miserable Condition are those unhappy Governors in, who are so far from feeding those committed to their Care with the sincere Milk of the Word, to the Intent they may grow thereby, that they neither search the Scriptures themselves, nor are careful to explain them to others? Such Families must be in a happy Way indeed to do their Master's Will, who take such prodigious Pains to know it! Would one not imagine that they had turned Converts to the Church of Rome; that they thought *Ignorance* the Mother of *Devotion*; and that those were to be condemned as Hereticks who read their *Bibles*? And yet how few Families are there amongst us, who do not act after this unseemly Manner! But *shall I praise them in this? I praise them not: Brethren, this Thing ought not so to be.*

2. Pass we on now to the second Means whereby every Governor and his Household ought to serve the LORD, *viz. Family Prayer.*

This is a Duty, though as much neglected, yet as absolutely necessary as the former. *Reading* is a good Preparative for *Prayer*; as *Prayer* is an excellent Means to render *Reading* effectual. And the Reason why every Governor of a Family should join both these Exercises together, is plain, because a Governor of a Family cannot

not perform his *Priestly* Office (which we before observed he is in some Degree invested with) without performing this Duty of *Family Prayer*.

We find it therefore remarked, when mention is made of *Cain* and *Abel's* offering Sacrifices, that they brought them. But to whom did they bring them? Why, in all Probability to their Father *Adam*, who, as Priest of the Family, was to offer Sacrifice in their Names. And so likewise ought every spiritual Son of the second *Adam*, who is intrusted with the Care of an Household, to offer up the spiritual Sacrifices of Supplications and Thanksgivings, acceptable to GOD through JESUS CHRIST, in the Presence and Name of all who wait upon, or eat Meat at his Table.

Thus we read our Blessed LORD behaved, when he tabernacled amongst us: For it is said often, that *he was alone* praying with his twelve Disciples, which was then his little Family. And he himself has promised a particular Blessing to joint Supplications: *For wheresoever, says he, two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the Midst of them.* And again, *If two or three are agreed touching any Thing they shall ask, it shall be given them.* Add to this, that we are commanded by the Apostle to *pray always, with all Manner of Supplication*, which doubtless includes *Family Prayer*. And holy *Joshua*, when he set up the good Resolution in the Text, that he and his Household would *serve the LORD*, certainly resolved withal to *pray* with his Family, which is one of the best Testimonies they could give of their serving him.

Besides,

Besides, there no Families but what have some common Blessings, of which they have been all Partakers, to give Thanks for; some common Crosses and Afflictions, which they are to pray against; some common Sins which they are all to lament and bewail: But how this can be done without joining together in one common Act of Humiliation, Supplication, and Thanksgiving, is difficult to devise.

From all which Considerations put together, it is evident, that *Family Prayer* is a great and necessary Duty; and consequently, those Governors that neglect it are certainly without Excuse. And it is much to be feared, if they live without *Family Prayer*, they live without *GOD in the World*.

And yet such an hateful Character as this is, it is to be feared, that was GOD to send out an Angel to destroy us, as he did once to destroy the *Egyptian First-born*, and withal give him a Commission, *as then*, to spare no Houses but where they saw the Blood sprinkled on the Lintel and Door-posts, so now to let no Families escape but those that called upon him in Morning and Evening Prayer; few would remain unhurt by his avenging Sword. *Christians* shall I term such Families, or *Heathens*? Doubtless they deserve not the Name of *Christians*; and *Heathens* will surely rise up in Judgment against such profane Families of this Generation: For they had always their Household Gods, whom they worshipped, and whose Assistance they frequently invoked. And a pretty Pass those Families are arrived at, who must be sent to School to *Pagans*. But will not the LORD be avenged on such profane Households as these? Will he not pour out

out his Fury upon those that call not upon his Name?

3. But it is Time for me to hasten to the third and last Means I shall recommend, whereby every Governor ought with his Household to *serve the LORD*, viz. by *catechizing and instructing* their Children and Servants, and bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD.

That this, as well as the two former, is a Duty incumbent on every Governor of an House, appears from that famous Encomium or Commendation GOD gives of *Abraham*. *I know*, says the Most High, *that he will command his Children and his Household after him to keep the Way of the LORD, to do Justice and Judgment.* And indeed scarce any Thing is more frequently pressed upon us in Holy Writ, than this Duty of *Catechizing*. Thus says God in a Passage before cited, *Thou shalt teach these Words diligently unto thy Children.* And Parents are commanded in the *New Testament* to *breed up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD*. The Holy Psalmist acquaints us, that one great End why GOD did so great Wonders for his People was, *to the Intent that when they grew up they should shew their Children or Servants, the same.* And in *Deuteronomy*, Chap. vi. at the 20th and following Verses, GOD strictly commands his People to instruct their Children in the true Nature of the Ceremonial Worship, when they should enquire about it, as he supposed they would do in Time to come. And if Servants and Children were to be instructed in the Nature of *Jewish Rites*, much more ought they *now* to be initiated and grounded in the Doctrines
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and first Principles of the Gospel of CHRIST: Not only because it is a Revelation which has brought Life and Immortality to a fuller and clearer Light, but also because many Seducers are gone abroad into the World, who do their utmost Endeavour to destroy not only the Superstructure, likewise to sap the very Foundation of our most Holy Religion.

Would then, the present Generation have their Posterity be true Lovers and Honourers of GOD, Masters and Parents must take *Solomon's* good Advice, and train up and catechize their respective Households in the Way wherein they should go.

I am aware but of one Objection that can with any Shew of Reason, be urged against what has been advanced; which is, That such a Procedure as this will take up too much Time, and hinder Families too long from their Worldly Business. But it is much to be questioned whether Persons that start such an Objection are not of the same hypocritical Spirit as the Traytor *Judas*, who had Indignation against devout *Mary*, for being so profuse of her Ointment, in anointing our Blessed Lord, and asked Why it might not be sold for Two Hundred Pence, and given to the Poor. For has GOD given us so much Time to work for Ourselves, and shall we not allow some small Pittance of it, Morning and Evening, to be devoted to his more immediate Worship and Service? Have not People read, That it is GOD who gives Men Power to get Wealth, and therefore that the best Way to prosper in the World is to secure His Favour? And has not our blessed Lord himself promised, That

if we seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, all outward Necessaries shall be added unto us.

Abraham, no doubt, was a Man of as great Business as such Objectors may be; but yet he would find Time, to command his Household to *serve the LORD*. Nay, *David*, was a King, and consequently had a great Deal of Business upon his Hands; yet notwithstanding, He professes that he would walk in his House, with a perfect Heart. And, to instance but one more, Holy *Joshua* was a Person certainly engaged very much in Temporal Affairs; and yet he solemnly declares before all *Israel*, That as for him and his Household, they would *serve the LORD*. And did Persons but redeem their Time, as *Abraham*, *David*, or *Joshua* did, they would no longer complain that Family Duties kept them too long from the Business of the World.

III. But my *Third* and last General Head, under which I was to offer some Motives, in order to excite all Governors with their respective Households, to *serve the LORD* in the Manner before recommended, I hope, will serve instead of a Thousand Arguments to prove the Weakness and Folly of any such Objection.

I. And the first Motive I shall mention is the Duty of Gratitude, you that are Governors of Families owe to GOD.—Your Lot every one must confess, is cast into a fair Ground: Providence hath given you a goodly Heritage, above many of your Fellow-Creatures, and therefore, out of a Principle of Gratitude, you ought to

endeavour, as much as in you lies, to make every Person of your respective Households to call upon him as long as they live: (Not to mention that the Authority, with which God has invested you as Parents and Governors of Families, is a Talent committed to your Trust, and which you are bound to improve to your Master's Honour.) In other Things we find Governors and Parents can exercise Lordship over their Children and Servants readily, and frequently enough can say to one *Go*, and he goeth; and to another *Come*, and he cometh; to a third, *Do this*, and he doeth it. And shall this Power be so often employed in your own Affairs, and never exerted in the Things of GOD? Be astonish'd, O Heavens, at this.

Thus did not faithful *Abraham*; No, GOD says, that He knew *Abraham* would command his Servants and Children after him. Thus did not *Joshua*: No, he was resolved not only to walk with GOD himself, but to improve his Authority in making all about him do so too: *As for me and my Household we will serve the LORD.* Let us go and do likewise.

2. But, Secondly, if *Gratitude* to GOD will not, methinks *Love* and *Pity* to your Children, should move you, with your respective Families, to serve the LORD.

Most People express a great Fondness for their Children; nay so great, that very often their own Lives are wrapped up in those of their Offspring. *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb?* says GOD by his Prophet *Isaiah*. He speaks of it as a monstrous Thing, and scarce
I credible.

credible. But the Words immediately following affirm it to be possible, *Yea, They may forget*; and Experience also assures us they may. *Father and Mother* may both *forsake their Children*: For what greater Degree of Forgetfulness can they express towards them, than to neglect the Improvement of their better Part, and not bring them up in the Knowledge and Fear of GOD.

It is true, indeed, Parents seldom forget to provide for their Children's Bodies, (though, it is to be feared, some Men are so far sunk beneath the Beasts that perish, as to neglect even that;) but then how often do they forget, or rather when do they remember, to secure the Salvation of their immortal Souls? But is this their Way of expressing their Fondness for the Fruit of their Bodies? Is this the best Testimony they can give of their Affection to the Darling of their Hearts? Then was *Dalilah* fond of *Sampson*, when she delivered him up into the Hands of the *Philistines*: Then were those *Russians* well-affected to *Daniel*, when they threw him into a Den of Lions.

3. But, Thirdly, if neither *Gratitude* to GOD, nor *Love* and *Pity* to your Children, will prevail on you; yet let a Principle of common *Honesty* and *Justice* move you to set up the holy Resolution in the Text.

This is a Principle which all Men would be thought to act upon. But certainly, if any may be truly censured for their Injustice, none can be more liable to such Censure than those who think themselves injured if their Servants withdraw themselves from their bodily Work, and yet they in return take no Care of their inestimable Souls.

For

For is it just that Servants should spend their Time and Strength in their Master's Service, and Masters not at the same time give them what is just and equal for their Service.

It is true, some Men may think they have done enough when they give unto their Servants Food and Rayment, and say, Did not I bargain with thee for so much a Year? But if they give them no other Reward than this, What do they less for their very Beasts; But are not Servants better than they? Doubtless they are: And however Masters may put off their Convictions for the present, they will find a Time will come, when they shall know they ought to have given them some Spiritual, as well as Temporal Wages; and the Cry of those that have mowed down their Fields will enter into the Ears of the LORD of *Sabbath*.

4. But, Fourthly, if neither *Gratitude* to GOD, *Pity* to Children, nor a Principle of common *Justice* to Servants, are sufficient to balance all Objections; yet let that darling, that prevailing Motive of *Self-Interest* turn the Scale, and engage you with your respective Households to *serve the LORD*.

This weighs greatly with you in other Matters: Be then persuaded to let it have a due and full Influence on you in this, and if it has, if you have but Faith as a Grain of Mustard-Seed, how can you avoid believing that promoting *Family Religion* would be the best Means to promote your own temporal as well as eternal Welfare? For *Godliness has the Promise of the Life that now is, as well as that which is to come.*

Besides, you all, doubtless, wish for honest Servants, and pious Children: And to have them prove otherwise, would be as great a Grief to you as it was to *Elisba* to have a treacherous *Gebazi*, or *David* to be troubled with a rebellious *Absalom*. But how can it be expected they should learn their Duty, except those set over them take Care to teach it them? Is it not as reasonable to expect you should reap where you had not sown, or gather where you had not strawed?

Did *Christianity*, indeed, give any Countenance to Children and Servants to disregard their *Parents and Masters according to the Flesh*, or represent their Duty to them as inconsistent with their entire Obedience to their *Father and Master which is in Heaven*, there might then be some Pretence to neglect instructing them in the Principles of such a Religion. But since the Precepts of this pure and undefiled Religion are all of them holy, just and good; and the more they are taught their Duty to GOD, the better they will perform their Duties to you; methinks then to neglect the Improvement of their Souls, out of a dread of spending too much Time in religious Duties, is acting quite contrary to your own Interest as well as Duty.

5. *Fifthly and lastly*, if neither *Gratitude* to GOD, *Love* to your Children, *common Justice* to your Servants, nor even that most prevailing Motive *Self-Interest*, will excite; yet let a Consideration of the *Terrors of the Lord* persuade you to put in Practice the pious Resolution in the Text. Remember the Time will come, and that perhaps very shortly, when we must all appear before

fore the Judgement-Seat of CHRIST ; where we must give a solemn and strict Account how we have had our Conversation, in our respective Families in this World. How will you endure to see your Children and Servants (who ought to be your Joy and Crown of Rejoicing in the Day of our Lord JESUS CHRIST) coming out as so many swift Witnesses against you ; cursing the Father that begot them, the Womb that bare them, the Paps which they have sucked, and the Day they ever entered into your Houses ? Think you not the Damnation which Men must endure for their own Sins will be sufficient, that they need load themselves with the additional Guilt of being accessory to the Damnation of others also ? Oh consider this, all ye that forget to serve the LORD with your respective Households, *lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.*

But GOD forbid, Brethren, that any such Evil should befall you : No, rather will I hope that you have been, in some Measure, convinced by what has been said of the great Importance of *Family Religion* ; and therefore are ready to cry out, in the Words immediately following the Text, *God forbid that we should forsake the LORD* ; and again, Verse 21, *Nay but we will, with our several Households, serve the LORD.*

And that there may be always such a Heart in you, let me, to conclude, exhort all Governors of Families, in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, often to reflect on the inestimable Worth of their own Souls, and the infinite Ransom, even the precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST, which has been paid down for them. Remember, I beseech you remember, that you are fallen

Creatures, that you are by Nature lost to and estranged from GOD; and that you can never be restored to your primitive Hapyness, till by being born again of the *Holy Ghost*, you arrive at your primitive State of Purity, have the Image of GOD re-instamped upon your Souls, and are thereby made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance with the Saints in Light. Do, I say, but seriously and frequently reflect on, and act as Person that believe such important Truths, and you will no more neglect your Family's Spiritual Welfare than your own. No, the *Love of GOD*, which will then be *shed abroad in your Hearts*, will constrain you to do your utmost to preserve them: And the deep Sense of GOD's free Grace in CHRIST JESUS, (which you will then have) in calling you, will excite you to do your utmost to save others, especially those of your own Household. And though, after all your pious Endeavours, some may continue unreformed; yet you will have this comfortable Reflection to make, that you did what you could to make your Families *religious*: And may comfortably expect to sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven with *Abraham, Joshua and Cornelius*, and all the godly Householders, who in their several Generations shone forth as so many Lights in their respective Households upon Earth.

S E R M O N XI.

Intercession every CHRISTIAN'S D U T Y.

I T H E S S. V. 25.

Brethren, Pray for us.

IF we enquire, why there is so little *Love* to be found amongst *Christians*, why the very Characteristick, by which every one should know that we are Disciples of the Holy JESUS, is almost banished out of the Christian World,—We shall find it, in a great Measure, owing to a Neglect or superficial Performance of that most God-like Part of secret Prayer *Intercession*, or imploring the Divine Grace or Mercy in behalf of others.

Some forget this Duty of Praying for others, because they seldom remember to pray for themselves: And even good People, who are constant in Praying to their Father which is in Heaven, are often so constrained and selfish in their Addresses to the Throne of Grace, that they do not enlarge their Petitions for the Welfare of their Fellow Christians as they ought; and thereby fall short of attaining that Christian Charity,

that unfeigned Love of their Brethren; which their sacred Profession obliges them to aspire after, and without which, though they would *bestow all their Goods to feed the Poor, and even give their Bodies to be burned, yet it would profit them nothing.*

Since then these Things are so, I shall from the Words of the Text (tho' originally intended to be more confined) endeavour to shew,

- I. *First*, That it is every *Christian's* Duty to pray for Others, as well as for himself.
- II. *Secondly*, Who are Those that we ought to pray for, and in what Manner we should do it. And,
- III. *Thirdly*, I shall offer some Motives to excite all *Christians* to abound in this great Duty of *Intercession*.

I. *First* then, I shall endeavour to shew, That it is every *Christian's* Duty to pray for Others, as well as for Himself.

Now *Prayer* is a Duty founded on Natural Religion; the very *Heathens* never neglected it, though many *Christian Heathens* amongst us do:—And it is so essential to *Christianity*, that you might as reasonably expect to find a living Man without Breath, as a true *Christian* without the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication.—Thus, no sooner was St. *Paul* converted, but *behold he prayeth*, saith the Lord Almighty. And thus will it be with every Child of GOD, as soon as he becomes such: Prayer being truly called, *The natural Cry of the New-born Soul.*

For

For in the Heart of every True Believer there is a Heavenly Tendency, a Divine Attraction, which as sensibly draws him to converse with GOD, as the Load-stone attracts the Needle.

A deep Sense of their own Weakness, and of CHRIST's Fulness; a strong Conviction of their Natural Corruption, and of the Necessity of renewing Grace; will not let them *rest from crying Day and Night* to their Almighty Redeemer, that the Divine Image, which they lost in *Adam*, may through his All-powerful Mediation, and the Sanctifying Operations of his blessed Spirit, be begun, carried on, and fully perfected both in their Souls and Bodies.

Thus earnest, thus importunate, are all sincere *Christians* in praying for themselves: But then, not having so lively, lasting, and deep a Sense of the Wants of their Christian Brethren, they are for the most Part too remiss and defective in their Prayers for *them*—Whereas, was the *Love of GOD* shed abroad in our Hearts, and did we love our Neighbour in that Manner in which the Son of GOD our Saviour *loveth us*, and according to his Command and Example, we could not but be as importunate for their Spiritual and Temporal Welfare, as for our own; and as earnestly desire and endeavour that others should share in the Benefits of the Death and Passion of JESUS CHRIST as we ourselves.

Let not any one think, that this is an uncommon Degree of Charity; an high Pitch of Perfection, which every one cannot attain unto; since it is no such Thing:—For if we are all commanded to *Love our Neighbour* (that is every Man) even *as ourselves*, nay to *Lay down our Lives for the Brethren*; then, it is the Duty of

all to pray for their Neighbours as much as for themselves, and by all possible Acts and Expressions of Love and Affection towards them, at all Times, to shew their Readiness even to lay down their Lives for them, if ever it should please GOD to call them to it.

Our Blessed Saviour as He hath set us an Example, that we should follow his Steps in every Thing else, so hath he more especially in This:—For in that most Divine, that most Perfect and inimitable Prayer (recorded in the 17th. of St. *John*) which he put up just before his Passion, we find but *few* Petitions for his own, though *many* for his Disciples Welfare: And in that most perfect Form which he has been pleased to prescribe us, we are taught to say,—not *My*, but *Our Father*,—Thereby to put us in Mind, that, whenever we approach the Throne of Grace, we ought to pray not for ourselves alone, but for all our Brethren in CHRIST.

Intercession then is certainly a Duty incumbent upon all *Christians*.

II. Whom we are to intercede for, and How this Duty is to be performed, comes next to be considered,—under my *Second general Head*.

I. And first, our Intercession must be universal. *I will*, says the Apostle, *that Prayers, Supplications and Intercessions be made for all Men*: For as GOD's Mercy is over all his Works, as JESUS CHRIST died to redeem a People out of all Nations and Languages; so, we should pray, that all Men may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and be saved. Many precious Promises are

are made in Holy Writ; that the Gospel shall be published through the whole World, that the Earth shall be covered with the Knowledge of the LORD, as the Waters cover the Sea: And therefore it is our Duty not to confine our Petitions to our own Nation, but to pray that all those Nations, who now sit in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, may have the glorious Gospel shine out upon Them, as well as upon Us. But you need not that any Man should teach you this, since ye yourselves are taught of GOD, even of JESUS CHRIST himself, to Pray, that his Kingdom may come; Part of the Meaning of which Petition is, That GOD's Ways may be known upon Earth, and his saving Health among All Nations.

2. Next to the Praying for all Men, we should, according to St. Paul's Rule, Pray for Kings; particularly, for our present Sovereign King GEORGE, and all that are put in Authority under him: That we may lead quiet Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.—For, if we consider how heavy the Burden of Government is, and how much the Welfare of any People depends on the Zeal and godly Conversation of those that have the Rule over them: If we set before us the many Dangers and Difficulties, to which Governors by their Station are exposed, and the continual Temptations they lie under to Luxury and Self-Indulgence; we shall not only pity, but pray for them,—That He who preserved Esther, David, and Josiah, unspotted from the World, amidst the Grandeur of a Court, and gave Success to their Designs, would also preserve them Holy and Unblameable, and prosper all the Works of their Hands upon them.

3. But, *Thirdly*, you ought, in a more especial Manner, to pray for those, whom *the Holy Ghost hath made Overseers over You*. This is what St. Paul begs, again and again, of the Churches to whom he writes:—*Brethren*, says he in the Text, *Pray for Us*; and again, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*,—*Praying always*, says he, *with all Manner of Supplication*; and for me also, that I may open my Mouth boldly, to declare the *Mystery of the Gospel*. And in another Place, to express his Earnestness in this Request, and the great Importance of their Prayers to Him,—He bids the Church *Strive*, (or, as the original Word signifies, *Be in an Agony*) together with Him in their Prayers. And surely, if the great St. Paul, that chosen Vessel, that Favourite of Heaven, needed the most importunate Prayers of his Christian Converts; much more do the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel stand in Need of the *Intercession* of their respective Flocks.

And I cannot but in a more especial Manner, insist upon this Branch of your Duty, because it is a Matter of such Importance: For, no doubt, much Good is frequently withheld from many, by Reason of their neglecting to pray for their Ministers, which they would have received, had they prayed for them as they ought. Not to mention, that People often complain of the Want of diligent and faithful Pastors.—But how do they deserve good Pastors, who will not earnestly pray to God for such?

The Church has set a-part Four Seasons in the Year for this Purpose, and to call down a Blessing on those who are to be ordained to any
Holy

Holy Function: But by how very few are the *Ember Days* observed! And if we will not *pray to the Lord of the Harvest*, can it be expected, *he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest?*

Besides, What Ingratitude is it, not to pray for your Ministers! For shall they watch and Labour in the Word and Doctrine for you, and for your Salvation, and shall not you pray for them in Return? If *any* bestow Favours on your Bodies, you think it right, meet, and your bounden Duty, to *pray for Them*; and shall not they be remembred in your Prayers, who daily feed and nourish your Souls? Add to all this, that praying for your Ministers, will be a manifest Proof of your believing, that though *Paul* plant, and *Apollos* water, yet it is GOD alone who giveth the Increase. And you will also find it the best Means you can use, to promote your own Welfare: Because GOD, in Answer to your Prayers, may impart a double Portion of his Holy Spirit to them, whereby they will be qualified to deal out to you larger Measures of Knowledge in Spiritual Things, and be enabled more skilfully *to divide the Word of Truth*.

Would Men but constantly observe this Direction, and when their Ministers are *praying* in their Name to GOD, humbly beseech him to perform all their Petitions: Or, when they are speaking in GOD's Name to them, pray that *the Holy Ghost may fall on all them that hear the Word*; we should *then* find a more visible good Effect of their Doctrine, and a greater Mutual Love between Ministers and their People. For Ministers Hands would *then* be held up by the People's Intercessions, and the People will never dare

dare to vilify or traduce those who are the constant Subjects of their Prayers.

4. Next to our Ministers, our *Friends* claim a Place in our *Intercessions*; but then we should not content ourselves with Praying in general Terms for them, but suit our Prayers to their particular Circumstances. When *Meriam* was afflicted with a Leprosy from GOD, *Moses* cried and said, *LORD heal her*: And when the Nobleman came to apply to JESUS CHRIST, in behalf of his Child, he said, *LORD, my little Daughter lieth at the Point of Death, I pray the come, and heal her*. In like Manner, when any of our Friends are under any afflicting Circumstances, we should endeavour to pray for them, with a particular Regard to those Circumstances. For Instance, Is a Friend sick? We should pray That if it be GOD's good Pleasure, it may not be unto Death; but if otherwise, That he would give him Grace so to take his Visitation, that, after this painful Life ended, he may dwell with him in Life everlasting. Is a Friend in Doubt in a Matter? We should lay his Case before GOD, as *Moses* did that of the Daughters of *Zelophehad*, and pray, That GOD's Holy Spirit may lead him into all Truth. Is he in Want? We should pray, That his Faith may never fail, and that in GOD's due Time he may be relieved. And in all other Cases, we should not pray for our Friends *only in Generals*, but suit our Petitions to their *particular Sufferings and Afflictions*; for otherwise, we may never ask perhaps for the Things our Friends *most want*.

It must be confessed, that such a Procedure will oblige us sometimes to break from the Forms

we use ; but if we accustom ourselves to it, and have a deep Sense of what we ask for, the most illiterate *Christians* will not want Words to express themselves.

We have many noble Instances in Holy Scripture of the Success of this Kind of *particular Intercession* ; but none more remarkable than that of *Abraham's* Servant, in the Book of *Genesis*, who being sent to seek a Wife for his Son *Isaac*, prayed in a most particular Manner in his Behalf.—And the Sequel of the Story informs us how remarkably his Prayer was answered. And did *Christians* now pray for their Friends in the same particular Manner, and with the same Faith as *Abraham's* Servant did for his Master ; they would, no doubt, in many Instances, receive as visible Answers, and have as much Reason to bless God for them as he had.

5. But farther, as we ought thus to intercede for our Friends, so in like Manner must we also Pray for our *Enemies*. *Bless them that Curse you, says JESUS CHRIST, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.* Which Commands he enforced in the strongest Manner by his own Example, when in the very Agonies and Pangs of Death, he prayed even for his *Murderers*.—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*—This, it must needs be confessed, is a difficult Duty, yet not impracticable to those, who have renounced the Things of this present Life, (from an inordinate Love of which alone all Enmities arise) and who knowing the terrible *Woes* denounced against those who offend *CHRIST's Little Ones*, can, out of real Pity,

Pity, and a Sense of their Danger, pray for *those by whom such Offences come.*

6. Lastly, and to conclude this Head, we should *Intercede* for all that are any Ways afflicted in Mind, Body, or Estate; — for all who desire, and stand in need of our Prayers,—and for all who do not pray for themselves.

And Oh! that all who hear me, would set apart some Time every Day for the due Performance of this most necessary Duty!—In Order to which,

I shall now proceed to the *Third general Thing* proposed; namely,

III. To shew the Advantages, and offer some Considerations to excite you to the Practice of *Daily Intercession.*

I. And *First*, it will fill your Hearts with *Love one to another.*—He that every Day heartily intercedes at the Throne of Grace for all Mankind, cannot but in a short Time be filled with Love and Charity to *all*: and the frequent Exercise of his Love in this Manner, will insensibly enlarge his Heart, and make him Partaker of that exceeding Abundance of it which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD! Envy, Malice, Revenge, and such like hellish Tempers, can never long harbour in a gracious Intercessor's Breast; but he will be filled with Joy, Peace, Meekness, Long-suffering, and all other Graces of the Holy Spirit. By frequently laying his Neighbour's Wants before GOD, He will be touched with a Fellow feeling of them; He will rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those

those that weep.—Every Blessing bestowed on Others, instead of exciting Envy in him, will be looked on as an Answer to his particular Intercession, and fill his Soul with *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.*

Abound therefore in Acts of general and particular Intercessions; and when you hear of your Neighbour's Faults, instead of relating them to, and exposing them before others, lay them in Secret before GOD, and beg of him to correct and amend them. When you hear of a notorious Sinner, instead of thinking, *You do well to be angry*; beg of JESUS CHRIST to convert and make him a Monument of his Free-Grace; and you cannot imagine what a blessed Alteration this Practice will make in your Heart, and how much you will encrease Day by Day in the Spirit of Love and Meekness towards all Mankind!

But, further to excite you to the constant Practice of this Duty of Intercession, consider the many Instances given us in Holy Scripture, of the Power and Efficacy of it. Great and excellent Things are there recorded as the Effects of this divine Employ. It has stopped Plagues, it has opened and shut Heaven; and has frequently turned away GOD's Fury from his People. How was *Abimelech's* House freed from the Disease GOD sent amongst them, at the Intercession of *Abraham*! When *Phineas* stood up and prayed, how soon did the *Plague cease*! When *Daniel* humbled and afflicted his Soul, and interceded for the LORD's Inheritance, how quickly was an Angel dispatched to tell him, *his Prayer was heard*! And to mention but one Instance more, how does GOD own himself as it were quite overcome with the Importunity of *Moses*, when
he

he was interceding for his Idolatrous People,—
Let me alone, says GOD!

This sufficiently shews, I could almost say the Omnipotency of Intercession, and how we may, like *Jacob*, wrestle with GOD, and by an holy Violence prevail both for ourselves and others. And no doubt 'tis owing to the secret and prevailing Intercessions of the *few* righteous Souls who still remain among us, that GOD has yet spared this miserably sinful Nation: For were there not some such faithful Ones, like *Moses*, left to stand in the Gap, we should soon be destroyed, even as was *Sodom*, and reduced to Ashes like unto *Gomorrah*.

But, to stir you up yet farther to this God-like Exercise of *Intercession*, consider that, in all Probability, it is the frequent Employment even of the glorified Saints: For though they are delivered from the Burden of the Flesh, and restored to the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD, yet as their Happiness cannot be perfectly consummated 'till the Resurrection of the last Day, when all their Brethren will be glorified with them, we cannot but think they are often importunate in beseeching our heavenly Father, shortly to accomplish the Number of his Elect, and to hasten his Kingdom. And shall not we who are on Earth, be often exercised in this divine Employ with the glorious Company of the *Spirits of just Men made perfect*? Since our Happiness is so much to consist in the Communion of Saints in the Church Triumphant *above*, shall we not frequently intercede for the Church Militant *here below*; and earnestly beg, that we may all be one, even as the Holy JESUS and his Father are One, that we may also be made perfect in one?

To

To provoke you to this great Work and Labour of Love—Remember that it is the never ceasing Employment of the holy and highly exalted JESUS himself, who sits at the Right Hand of GOD to hear all our Prayers and to make continual Intercession for us! So that he who is constantly employed in interceding for others, is doing *that* on Earth, which the Eternal Son of GOD is always doing in Heaven.

Imagine therefore, when you are lifting up holy Hands in Prayer for one another,—That you see the Heavens opened, and the Son of GOD in all his Glory, as the Great High Priest of your Salvation, offering up and pleading for you, the all-sufficient Merit of his Sacrifice before the Throne of his heavenly Father! Join then Your Intercessions with His, and beseech him, that *they* may through him come up as Incense, and be received as a Sweet-smelling Savour, acceptable in the Sight of GOD! This Imagination will strengthen your Faith, excite a holy Earnestness in your Prayers, and make you wrestle with GOD, as *Jacob* did, when *He saw him Face to Face and his Life was preserved*; as *Abraham*, when he pleaded for *Sodom*; and as JESUS CHRIST himself, when he prayed, being in an Agony, so much the more earnestly the Night before his bitter Passion!

And now, Brethren, What shall I say more, since you are taught of JESUS CHRIST himself, to abound in Love, and in this good Work of Praying one for another. Though ever so mean, though as poor as *Lazarus*, You will then become Benefactors to all Mankind; Thousands, and Twenty-times Ten Thousands, will then be blessed for your Sakes! and after You have employed

ployed a few Years in this Divine Exercise *here*, You will be translated to that happy Place, where you have so often wished others might be advanced; and be exalted to sit at the Right Hand of our All-powerful, All-prevailing *Intercessor*, in the Kingdom of His Heavenly Father *hereafter*!

However, I cannot but in an especial Manner press this upon you *now*, because all Ye, amongst whom I have now been Preaching, in all Probability will see me no more: For I am now going (I trust under the Conduct of God's Most Holy Spirit) from you, knowing not what shall befall me: I need therefore your most importunate Intercessions, that nothing may move me from my Duty, and that I may not count even my Life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry I have received of the Lord JESUS to testify the Gospel of the Grace of GOD!

Whilst I have been here, to the best of my Knowledge I have not failed to declare unto you the whole Will of GOD:—And though my Preaching may have been a *Savour of Death unto Death* to some; yet I trust it has been also a *Savour of Life unto Life* to Others; and therefore I earnestly hope that those will not fail to remember me in their Prayers.—As for my own Part, the many unmerited Kindnesses I have received from you, will not suffer me to forget You: Out of the Deep, therefore, I trust shall my Cry come unto GOD; and whilst the Winds and Storms are blowing over me, unto the LORD will I make my Supplication for You. For it is but a little while, and *We must All appear before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST*; where

where I must give a strict Account of the Doctrine I have preached, and You of your Improvement under it. And Oh! that I may never be called out as a swift Witness, against any of those, for whose Salvation I have sincerely though too faintly, longed and laboured!—

It is true, I have been censured by some as acting out of sinister and selfish Views; *but it is a small Matter with me* to be judged by Man's Judgment;—I hope my Eye is single, but I beseech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, pray that it may be more so!—and that I may increase with the Increase of Grace in the Knowledge and Love of GOD through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

And now, Brethren, what shall I say more?—I could wish to continue my Discourse much longer; for I can never fully express the Desire of my Soul towards you! Finally, therefore, Brethren, *Whatsoever Things are Holy, whatsoever Things are Pure, whatsoever Things are Honest, whatsoever Things are of Good Report: if there be any Consolation in CHRIST, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Hopes of our appearing to the Comfort of each other at the awful Tribunal of JESUS CHRIST, Think of the Things that you have heard, and of those which your Pastors have declared and will yet declare unto You; and continue under their Ministry to work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling:—*So that whether I should never see you any more, or whether it shall please GOD to bring me back again at any Time, I may always have the Satisfaction of knowing that your Conversation is *such as becometh the Gospel of CHRIST.*

I almost persuade myself, that I could willingly suffer *all Things*, so that it might any Ways promote the Salvation of your precious and immortal Souls; — And I beseech You, as my last Request, *Obey them that have the Rule over You in the Lord*; and be always ready to attend on their Ministry, as it is your bounden Duty. Think not that I desire to have myself exalted at the Expence of another's Character; but rather think this—*Not to have any Man's Person too much in Admiration; but esteem all your Ministers highly in Love*, as they justly deserve for *their Work's Sake*.

And now, Brethren, I commend you to GOD, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified. May GOD reward you for all your *Works of Faith, and Labours of Love*, and make you to abound more and more in every good Word and Work towards all Men. May he truly convert all that have been convinced, and awaken all that are *Dead in Trepasses and Sins*! May he confirm all that are wavering! And may you all go on from one Degree of Grace unto another, till you arrive unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of CHRIST; and thereby be made meet to stand before that GOD, *in whose Presence is the Fulness of Joy, at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for ever more!*

Amen! Amen!

S E R M O N XI.

Worldly Business no Plea for the Neglect of RELIGION.

MATT. viii. 22.

Let the Dead bury their Dead.

ST. PAUL preaching at *Athens*, tells them, that as he passed by and beheld their Devotions, he perceived they were *in all Things too superstitious*. But was this Apostle to rise, and come publishing the glad Tidings of Salvation in any of our populous Cities, he would see no Reason why he should charge the Inhabitants with this; but rather as he passed by and observed the Tenor of their Life, say, I perceive in all Things ye are too Worldly-minded; ye are too eagerly bent on pursuing your lawful Business; so eagerly, as either wholly to neglect, or at least too heedlessly to attend on *the one Thing needful*.

There cannot then be a greater Charity shewn to the Christian World, than to sound an Alarm in

in their Ears, and to warn them of the inexpressible Danger of continually grasping after the Things of this Life, without being equally, nay a thousand times more concerned for their Well-being in a future State.

And there is still the more Occasion for such an Alarm, because Worldly-mindedness so easily and craftily besets the Hearts of Men. For out of a specious Pretence of serving God in labouring for the Meat which perisheth, they are insensibly lulled into such a spiritual Slumber, as scarce to perceive their Neglect to secure that which endureth to everlasting Life.

The Words of the Text, if not at first View, yet when examined and explained, will be found applicable to this Case, as containing an admirable Caution not to pursue the Affairs of this World at the Expence of our Happiness in the next.

They are Words of *JESUS CHRIST* himself: The Occasion of their being spoken was this,—As he was conversing with those that were gathered round about him, he gave one of them an immediate Summons to follow him: But he, either afraid to go after such a persecuted Master, or rather loving this present World, says, *Suffer me first to go Home and bury my Father*, or, as most explain it, *Let me first go and dispatch some important Business I have now in Hand*. But *JESUS* said unto him, *Let the Dead bury their Dead*; Leave Worldly Business to Worldly Men, let thy secular Business be left undone, rather than thou shouldst neglect to follow me.

Whether this Person did as he was commanded, I know not; but this I know, — That what *CHRIST* said here in Person, he was often whispered

whispered with the small still Voice of his *Holy Spirit*, and said to many here present, that rise up early and late, take Rest and eat the Bread of Carefulness, Come draw off your Affections from the Things of this Life; take up your Cross and follow me. But they, willing to justify themselves, make Answer, *Lord suffer us first to bury our Fathers*, to dispatch our secular Affairs. — I say unto all such, *Let the Dead bury their Dead*, let your Worldly Business be left undone rather than you should neglect to follow him.

From the Words thus explained naturally arises this Proposition, — That no Business, though ever so important, can justify a Neglect of true Religion :

The Truth of which I shall first shew,
And then make an Application of it.

I. *First* then, I am to prove that no temporal Business, though ever so important, can justify a Neglect of *true Religion*.

By the Word *Religion* I do not mean any Set of moral Virtues, any partial Amendment of ourselves, or formal Attendance on any outward Duties whatsoever : but an Application of CHRIST's Whole and Personal Righteousness made by Faith to our Hearts ; a thorough real Change of Nature wrought in us by the invisible, yet powerful Operation of the *Holy Ghost*, preserved and nourished in our Souls by a constant Use of all the Means of Grace, evidenced by a good Life, and bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit.

This is the true and undefiled Religion,
and for the perfecting this good Work in our
K Hearts,

Hearts, the eternal Son of GOD came down and shed his precious Blood; for this End were we made, and sent into the World, and by this alone can we become the Sons of GOD. Were we indeed to judge by the common Practice of the World, we might think we were sent into it for no other Purpose than to care and toil for the uncertain Riches of this Life: But if we consult the lively Oracles, they will inform us, that we were born for nobler Ends, — to be born again from Above, — to be restored to the Divine Likeness by JESUS CHRIST, our Second *Adam*, and thereby be made meet to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; and consequently, there is an Obligation laid upon all, even the most busy People, to secure this End; it being an undeniable Truth, that all Creatures ought to answer the End for which they were created.

Some indeed are for confining Religion to the Clergy, and think it only belongs to those who serve at the Altar: But what a fatal Mistake is this, seeing all Persons are indifferently called by GOD to the same State of inward Holiness. As we are all corrupt in our Nature, so must we all be renewed and sanctified. And though it must be granted, that the Clergy lie under double Obligations to be Examples to Believers, in Faith, Zeal, Charity, and whatever else is commendable, and of good Report, as being more immediately dedicated to the Service of GOD; yet as we have been all baptized with one Baptism into the Death of CHRIST, we are all under the Necessity of performing our Baptismal Covenant, and perfecting Holiness in the Fear of GOD: For the Holy Scriptures point out to us but one Way of Admission into the Kingdom of CHRIST, — through the narrow Gate of a sound

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Conversion:

Conversion: And he that does not enter into the Sheepfold, whether Clergy or Layman, by this Door, will find to his everlasting Confusion, there is no climbing up another Way.

Besides, what a gross Ignorance of the Nature of *true Religion*, as well as of our own Happiness, does such a Distinction discover? For what does our Saviour by willing us to be religious require of us, but to subdue our corrupt Passions, to root out ill Habits, to engraft the Heavenly Graces of God's most Holy Spirit in their room; and, in one Word, to fill us with all the Fulness of God?

And will Men be so much their own Enemies, as to affirm this belongs only to those who minister in holy Things? Does it not equally concern the most active Man living? Is it the End of Religion to make Men happy, and is it not every one's Privilege to be as happy as he can? Do Persons in Business find the Corruptions of their Nature, and Disorder of their Passions, so pleasing, that they care not whether they ever regulate or root them out? Or will they consent that Ministers shall be alone Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? — If not, as they desire the same End, why will they not make Use of the same Means? Do they think that God will create a new Thing upon the Earth, and, contrary to the Purity of his Nature, and Immutability of his Counsel, admit them into Heaven in their natural State, because they have been encumbered about many worldly Things? Search the Scriptures, and see if they give any Room for such a groundless Hope.

But farther, one would imagine there was something of the highest Concern and utmost Importance in our temporal Affairs, that they

should divert so many from purifying their Hearts by Faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.

A covetous Miser, who neglects Religion by being continually intent on seeking great Things for himself and those of his own Household, flatters himself he herein acts most wisely, and at the same Time will censure and condemn a young Prodigal, who has no Time to be devout, because he is so perpetually engaged in wasting his Substance by riotous Living and following of Harlots. But yet a little while, and Men will be convinced, that they are as much without Excuse who lose their Souls by hunting after Riches, as those who lose them by hunting after sensual Pleasures. For though Business may assume an Air of Importance, when compared with other trifling Amusements, yet when put in the Balance with the Loss of our precious and immortal Souls, it is equally frivolous, — According to that of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

And now what need we any further Proof? We have heard the Decision out of CHRIST'S own Mouth. But because it is difficult to convince them of this important Truth, whose Hearts are blinded by the Deceitfulness of Riches, so that we had need cry out to them in the Language of the Prophet, *O Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD.* I shall lay before you one Passage of Scripture more, which I could wish were written on the Tables of all our Hearts. In the xivth of St. Luke, the 18th and following Verses, our blessed LORD puts forth this Parable, — *A certain Man made a great Supper, and bad many, and sent his Servant at Supper-Time, to*

call them that were bidden: But they all, with one Consent, began to make Excuse. The one said, I have bought a Piece of Ground, and I must needs go and see it, I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought a Yoke of Oxen, and I must needs go and prove them, I pray thee therefore have me excused. So the Servant returned, and shewed his Master all these Things.— And what follows? Did the Master accept of their Excuses? No, the Text tells us the Good Man was angry, and said, that *none of those which were bidden, should taste of his Supper.* And what does this Parable teach more or less, than that the most lawful Callings cannot justify our Neglect; nay, that they are no longer lawful when they in any wise interfere with the great Concerns of Religion? For the Marriage Supper here spoken of, means the Gospel; the Master of the House is CHRIST; the Servants sent out, are his Ministers, whose Duty it is, from time to time, to call the People to this Marriage-Feast, or, in other Words, to be religious. Now we find those that were bidden, were very well and honestly employed. There was no Harm in buying or seeing a Piece of Ground, or in going to prove a Yoke of Oxen; but here lay their Fault, — They were doing these Things when they were invited to come to the Marriage Feast.

Without doubt, Persons may very honestly and commendably be employed in following their respective Callings; but yet, if they are engaged so deeply in these, as to hinder their working out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling, they must expect the same Sentence with their Predecessors in the Parable, that none of them shall taste of CHRIST's Supper; for our particular

Calling, as of this or that Profession, must never interfere with our general and precious Calling, as we are Christians. Not that Christianity calls us entirely out of the World, the Holy Scriptures warrant no such Doctrine.

It is very remarkable, that in the *Book of Life*, we find some almost of all kinds of Occupations, who notwithstanding served GOD in their respective Generations. and shone as so many Lights in the World. Thus we hear of a good *Centurion* in the *Evangelists*, and a devout *Cornelius* in the *Acts*; a pious Lawyer; and some that walked with GOD, even of *Nero's* Household, in the *Epistles*; and our Divine Master himself, in his Check to *Martha*, does not condemn her for minding, but for being cumbred or perplexed about many Things.

No, you may, nay, you must labour, out of Obedience to GOD, even for the Meat which perisheth. But then, that I may, in the *Second Place*, apply what has been said;

I beseech you, by the Mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, let it not be at the Expence of that which endureth to everlasting Life; for, to repeat our Blessed Saviour's Words, *What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul; or, What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

Were we always to live in the World, then worldly Wisdom would be our highest Wisdom: But forasmuch as we have here no continuing City, and were only sent into this World to have our Natures changed, and to fit ourselves for that which is to come; then to neglect this important Work for a little worldly Gain, what is it but with profane *Esau*, to sell our Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage.

Alas!

Alas! how unlike are Christians to Christianity! they are commanded to *seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness, and all other real Necessaries shall be added unto them*; but they are fearful (*O Men of little Faith!*) if they should do so, all other Necessaries would be taken from them: They are strictly forbidden to be careful for the Morrow, and yet they rest not Night or Day, but are continually heaping up Riches for many Years, tho' they know not who shall gather them. Is this acting like Persons that are Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth? Is this keeping their Baptismal Vow? Or rather, Is it not directly apostatizing from it, and deserting the Service of JESUS CHRIST, to lift themselves under the Banner of *Mammon*?

But what will be the Hope of such Worldlings, when GOD shall take away their Souls? What if the Almighty should say to each of them, as he did to the rich Fool in the Gospel, *This Night shall thy Soul be required of thee*; Oh then, what would all those Things profit them, which they are now so busy in providing?

Was Eternal Life, that free Gift of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, to be purchased with Money; or could Men carry their Stocks beyond the Grave, to buy Oil for their Lamps, *i. e.* Grace for their Hearts, when they should be called to meet the Bridegroom, there might be some Reason why GOD might well bear with them: But since their Money is to perish with them: since it is certain, as they brought nothing into the World, so they can carry nothing out; or supposing they could, since there is no Oil to be bought, *i. e.* no Grace to be purchased when once the Lamp of their natural Life is gone out; Would it not be much more prudent to spend the

short Time they have here allotted them, in buying Oil while it may be had, and not for Fear of having a little less of that which will quickly be another Man's, eternally lose the true Riches?

What think you? Is it to be supposed that it grieved that covetous Worldling before mentioned, when his Soul sprung into the World of Spirits, that he could not stay here till he had pulled down his Barns and built greater? Or think you not that all Things here below seemed equally little to him then, and he only repented that he had not employed more Time in pulling down every high Thought that exalted itself against the Almighty, and building up his Soul in the Knowledge and Fear of GOD?

And thus it will be with all unhappy Men, who like him are disquieting themselves in a vain Pursuit after worldly Riches, and at the same Time are not rich towards GOD.

They may, for a Season, seem excellently well employed in being solicitously careful about the important Concerns of this Life; but when once their Eyes are opened by Death, and their Souls launched into Eternity, they will then see the Littleness of all sublunary Cares, and wonder they should be so besotted to the Things of another Life, while they were, it may be, applauded for their great Wisdom and profound Sagacity in the Affairs of this World.

Alas! how will they bemoan themselves for acting like the unjust Steward, so very wisely in their temporal Concerns, in calling their respective Creditors so carefully, and asking how much every one owes to them, and yet never remembering to call themselves to an Account, or enquire how much they owed their own Great LORD and Master?

And

And now what shall I say more? The God of this World, and the inordinate Desire of other Things, must have wholly stifled the Conscience of that Man, who does not see the Force of these plain Reasonings.

Permit me only to add a Word or two to the Rich, and Persons that are freed from the Business of this Life.

But here I must pause a while, for I am sensible that it is but an ungrateful, and as some may imagine, an assuming Thing, for such a Novice in Religion to take upon him to instruct Men in high Stations, and who perhaps would disdain to set me with the Dogs of their Flock.

But however, since St. *Paul*, who knew what best became a young Preacher, commanded *Timothy*, young as he was, to exhort and charge the Rich with all Authority; I hope none here that are so, will be offended, if with Humility I beg leave to remind them, tho' they once knew this, that if Persons in the most busy Employments are indispensibly obliged to *work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, much more ought they to do so, who are free from the Toils and Incumbrance of a lower Way of Life, and consequently have greater Opportunities and Leisure to prepare themselves for a future State.

But is this really the Case, or do we not find by fatal Experience that too many of those whom God has exalted above their Brethren, who are *cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fare sumptuously every Day*, by a sad Abuse of God's great Bounty towards them, think that their Stations set them above Religion, and so let the Poor, who live by the Sweat of their Brows, attend more constantly on the Means of Grace than they.

But woe unto such rich Men! for they have received their Consolation. Happy had it been if they had never been born: For if the careless irreligious Tradesman cannot be saved, where will the luxurious and wicked Gentlemen appear?

Let me therefore, by way of Conclusion, exhort all Persons, High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another, to make the Renewal of their fallen Nature, the one Business of their Lives; and to let no worldly Profit, no worldly Pleasure divert them from the Thoughts of it. Let this Cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*, be ever sounding in our Ears; and let us live as Creatures that are every Moment liable to be hurried away by Death to Judgment: Let us remember that this Life is a State of infinite Importance, a Point between two Eternities, and that after these few Days are ended, there will remain no more Sacrifice for Sin; let us be often asking ourselves, How we shall wish we had lived when we leave the World? And then we shall always live in such a State as we shall never fear to die in. So that whether we live, we shall live unto the LORD; or whether we die, we shall die unto the LORD; so that living or dying we may be the LORD's.

To which End, Let us beseech God, the Protector of all them that put their Trust in him, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, to increase and multiply upon us his Mercy, that he being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through Things Temporal, that we finally lose not the Things Eternal; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

S E R M O N XI.

The Marks of the NEW-BIRTH.

ACTS xix. 2.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

TWO Constructions have been given us of these Words; some have supposed, that the Question here put, is, Whether these Disciples, whom St. Paul found at *Ephesus*, after he had passed through the upper Coasts, had received the Holy Ghost, by Imposition of Hands at Confirmation.—Others think, that these Disciples had been already baptised into *John's* Baptism; but that not being attended with an immediate Effusion of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle here asks them, *Whether they had received the Holy Ghost by being baptised into JESUS CHRIST?* And upon their answering in the Negative, he first baptised, and then confirmed them in the Name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Which of these Interpretations is most true, is neither easy nor very necessary to determine. However, as the Words contain a most important Enquiry, without any Reference to the Context, I shall from them draw these two general Heads of Discourse.

- I. *First*, I shall shew who the Holy Ghost, here spoken of, is; and how we must all receive him before we can be stiled *True Believers*.
- II. *Secondly*, I shall lay down some Scripture Marks, whereby we may know, *Whether we have thus received the Holy Ghost, or not.*
- III. *Thirdly*, By Way of Conclusion, I shall address myself to several distinct Classes of Professors, concerning the Doctrine that shall have been delivered.

- I. And *First*, I am to shew who the Holy Ghost, spoken of in the Text, is; and how we must all receive him, e'er we can be stiled *True Believers*.

By the Holy Ghost here spoken of, is signified the Holy Spirit, — the third Person in the ever blessed Trinity, — consubstantial and coeternal with the Father and the Son, — proceeding from, yet equal to them both. — He is emphatically called *Holy*, because infinitely Holy in himself, and the Author and Finisher of all Holiness in us.

This blessed Spirit, who once moved on the Face of the great Deep, who overshadowed the Blessed Virgin before that Holy Thing was born of her, who descended in a bodily Shape like a Dove on our blessed LORD, when he came up out of the Water at his Baptism; and lighted afterwards in fiery Tongues on the Heads of all his Apostles, at the Day of *Pentecost*; this is the Holy Ghost, who must move on the Faces of our Souls; this Power of the Most High must come upon us, and we must be baptised with his Baptism and refining Fire, before we can be stiled *True Members* of its mystical Body.

Thus

Thus says the Apostle, *Know ye not that Christ is in you?* that is, by his Spirit, *unless you are Reprobates?* Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his. — And again, says St. John, *We know that we are his by the Spirit that he hath given us.*

It is not indeed necessary that we should have it now given in that miraculous Manner in which it was at first given to our LORD's Apostles, by Signs and Wonders. — But it is absolutely necessary that we should receive the Holy Ghost in his sanctifying Graces as really as they did, and so will it continue to be till the End of the World.

For thus stands the Case between GOD and Man. — GOD at first made Man upright, or as the sacred Penman expresses it, *In the Image of GOD made he Man.* — He that before had by his Almighty Fiat spoke the World into Being, breathed into Man the Breath of spiritual Life. — This was the finishing Stroke of the Creation: The Perfection of all the visible World, — and so near resembled its Divine Original, that GOD could not but rejoice, and take Pleasure in his own Likeness — And therefore we read, that when GOD had finished the inanimate and brutish Part of the Creation, he looked upon it, and behold it was *Good*; but when that lovely God-like Creature, *Man*, was made, behold it was *very Good*.

Happy then, unspeakably happy must Man needs be, who was thus Partaker of the Divine Nature; and thus might he have still continued happy, had he still continued Holy. — But GOD had placed him in a State of Probation, with a free Grant to eat of every Tree in the Garden of *Eden*, except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. — The Day he did eat thereof he was
surely

surely to die; that is, not only to be subject to temporal, but spiritual Death, and consequently to lose that Divine Image, that spiritual Life GOD had not long since breathed into him, and which was as much his Happiness as his Glory.

These, one would imagine, were easy Conditions for a finite Creature's Happiness to depend on. But Man, unhappy Man! being seduced by the Devil, and desiring, like him, to be equal with his Maker, eat of the forbidden Fruit, and thereby became liable to that Curse which the Eternal GOD, who cannot lie, had denounced against his Disobedience.

Accordingly we read, that soon after *Adam* had fallen, he complained that he was naked. — Naked not only as to his Body, but Naked and left destitute of those Divine Graces, which before decked and beautified his Soul. — The unhappy Mutiny and Disorder which the visible Creation fell into, those Briars and Thorns which now sprung up and overspread the Earth, were but poor Emblems, but lifeless Representations of that Confusion and Rebellion, those divers Lusts and Passions which sprung up in, and quite overwhelmed the Soul of Man immediately after the Fall. — Alas! he was now no longer the Image of the invisible GOD; but as he had imitated the Devil's Sin, he became Partaker of the Devil's Nature, and from an Union with, sunk into a State of direct Enmity against GOD.

Now in this dreadful disordered Condition are all of us brought into the World. — For as the Root is, such must the Branches be. — Accordingly we are told, that *Adam* begat a Son in his own Likeness, that is, with the same corrupt Nature which he himself had sunk into after he had eaten the forbidden Fruit. And Experience, as well

as Scripture proves, that we also are altogether born in Sin and Corruption, and therefore incapable, whilst in such a State, to hold Communion with GOD.—For as Light cannot have Communion with Darkness, so GOD can have no Communion with such polluted Sons of *Belial*.

Here then appears the End and Design why CHRIST was made manifest in the Flesh,—*viz.* to put an End to these Disorders, and to restore us to that primitive Dignity in which we were at first created. — Accordingly he shed his precious Blood to satisfy his Father's Justice for our Sins, and thereby also he purchased again for us the HOLY GHOST, who should once more re-instamp the Divine Image upon our Hearts, and make us capable of living with and enjoying GOD.

This, I say, was the only End of our LORD's coming into the World. — Nay, this is the only End why the World itself is now kept in Being. For as soon as a certain Number are sanctified out of it, the Heavens shall be wrapped up like a Scroll, the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth, and all that therein is, shall be burnt up.

This is that New-Birth mentioned by our blessed LORD to *Nicodemus*, without which we cannot see the Kingdom of GOD. This is what *St. Paul* calls being renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and herein consists that Holiness without which no Man shall see the LORD.

In this Manner then it is undeniably certain, we must receive the HOLY GHOST e'er we can be stiled true Members of CHRIST's mystical Body.

II. I come now, in the *Second Place*, to lay down some scriptural Marks, whereby we may easily judge whether we have received the HOLY GHOST or not.

And the *First Mark* I shall mention is,—our having received a Spirit of Prayer and Supplication:—For that always accompanies the Spirit of Grace.—No sooner was *Paul* converted, but behold he prayeth, says JESUS CHRIST. And this was urged as an Argument to convince *Ananias* that he was converted. And GOD's Elect are said to cry to him Day and Night.

For since one great Work of the Holy Spirit is to convince us of Sin, and to set us upon seeking Pardon and renewing Grace, thro' the all-sufficient Merits of a crucified Redeemer, whosoever has felt the Powers of the World to come awakening him from his spiritual Lethargy, cannot but be always crying out, LORD, what wouldst thou have me do? Or in the Language of the importunate blind *Bartimeus*, JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have Mercy upon me.

The blessed JESUS, as he received the Holy Ghost without Measure, so he evidenced it by nothing more than his frequent Addresses at the Throne of Grace. Accordingly we read, that he was often alone on the Mountain, praying.—That he rose a great while before Day to pray.—Nay, that he spent whole Nights in Prayer.—And whosoever is made Partaker of the same Spirit with the HOLY JESUS, will be of the same Mind, and delight in nothing so much as to draw nigh unto GOD, and lift up holy Hands and Hearts in fervent and devout Prayer.

It must be confessed indeed, that this Spirit of Supplication is often as it were sensibly lost, and decays

decays for some Time, even in those who have actually received the Holy Ghost. And they, thro' spiritual Dryness and Barrenness of Soul, find in themselves a Listlessness and Backwardness to the Duty of Prayer; — but then they take it as their Cross, and still persevere in seeking JESUS, though it be sorrowing. And their Hearts, notwithstanding, are fixed upon GOD, tho' they cannot exert their Affections so strongly as usual, on Account of that spiritual Deadness which GOD, for wise Reasons, has suffered to benumb their Souls.

But as for the formal Believer, it is not so with him. No, he either prays not at all, or if he does enter into his Closet, it is with Reluctance — out of Custom — or to satisfy the Checks of his Conscience — Whereas the true Believer can no more live without Prayer, than without Food Day by Day. And he finds his Soul as really and perceptibly fed by the one, as his Body is nourished and supported by the other.

A Second Scripture Mark of our having received the HOLY GHOST, is — not committing Sin —

Whoever is born of GOD, says St. John, sinneth not, neither can he sin because his Seed remaineth in him — Neither can he sin — This Expression does not imply the Impossibility of a spiritual Man's sinning. For we are told, that in many Things we offend all. It means only thus much; that a Man that is really born again of GOD, doth not wilfully commit Sin, much less live in the habitual Practice of it. For how shall he that is dead to Sin, as every converted Person is, live any longer therein?

'Tis true, a Man that is born again of GOD may, thro' Surprise or Violence of a Temptation,

on, fall into an Act of Sin: Witness the Adultery of *David*, and *Peter's* Denial of his Master. But then, like them, he quickly rises again, goes out from the World, and weeps bitterly; recovers his former Peace, by renewing his Acts of Faith on the perfect Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST*; takes double Heed to his Ways for the future, and perfects Holiness in the Fear of *GOD*.

The Meaning of this Expression of the Apostle, that a Man that is born again of *GOD*, cannot commit Sin, has been * fitly illustrated in the Example of a covetous Worldling, to the general Bent of whose Inclinations, Liberality and Profuseness are directly opposite. But if, upon some unexpected sudden Occasion, he does play the Prodigal, he immediately repents him of his Fault, and returns with double Care to his Savingness again. — And so is every one that is born again. To commit Sin is as contrary to the habitual Frame and Tendency of his Mind, as Generosity is to the Inclinations of a Miser. But if at any Time he is drawn into Sin, he immediately with double Zeal returns to his Duty, and brings forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

Whereas the unconverted Sinner is quite dead in Trespases and Sins, — or if he does abstain from the gross Acts of it, from worldly selfish Motives, yet there is some Right Eye he will not pluck out; some Right Hand which he will not cut off; some specious *Agag* that he will not sacrifice for *GOD*; and thereby he is convinced, that he is but a mere *Saul*; and consequently, whatever Pretensions he may make to the contrary, he has not yet received the *HOLY GHOST*.

* *Law's Christian Perfection.*

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A *Third* Mark whereby we may know whether or not we have received the HOLY GHOST is, — our Conquest over the World. — For *whoever is born of GOD*, says the Apostle, *overcometh the World.* — By the World we are to understand, as *St. John* expresses it, all that is in the World, the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life, — And by overcoming of it is meant our renouncing these, so as not to follow or be led by them. — For whosoever is born from above, has his Affections set on Things above: He feels a Divine Attraction in his Soul, which forcibly draws his Mind Heavenwards; and as the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so doth it make his Soul to long after the Enjoyment of his GOD.

Not that he is so taken up with the Affairs of another Life, as wholly to neglect the Business of this. No, a truly spiritual Man dares not stand any Day idle: But then he takes Care, though he laboureth for the Meat which perisheth, first to secure that which endureth to everlasting Life. Or if GOD has exalted him above his Brethren, yet, like *Moses*, *Joseph*, and *Daniel*, he notwithstanding looks upon himself as a Stranger and Pilgrim upon Earth. — Having received a Principle of new Life, he walks by Faith and not by Sight. — And his Hopes being full of Immortality, he can look on all Things here below as Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. — In short, tho' he is in, yet is not of the World: And as he was made for the Enjoyment of GOD, so nothing but GOD can satisfy his Soul.

The ever-blessed JESUS was a perfect Instance of overcoming the World. For though he went continually about doing Good, and always lived in a Press, yet wherever he was, his Conversati-
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on tended Heavenwards. In like Manner, he that is joined to the LORD in one Spirit, will so order his Thoughts, Words, and Actions aright, that he will evidence to all, that his Conversation is in Heaven.

On the contrary, an unconverted Man being of the Earth, is earthly: And having no spiritual Eye to discern spiritual Things, is always seeking for Happiness in this Life, where it never was, will, or can be found. Being not born again from above, he is bowed down by a Spirit of natural Infirmary; the Serpent's Curse becomes his Choice, and he eats of the Dust of the Earth all the Days of his Life.

A *Fourth* Scripture Mark of our *New-Birth*, or of our having received the HOLY GHOST, is,--our loving one another.

We know, says St. John, *we are passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.*—And by this, says JESUS CHRIST, *shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if ye have Love one towards another.*—Love is the fulfilling of the Gospel, as well as the Law; for GOD is Love, and whosoever dwelleth in GOD, dwelleth in Love.

But by this Love we are not to understand, a Softness and Tenderness of meer Nature, or a Love founded on worldly Motives (for this a natural Man may have) but a Love of our Brethren, proceeding from a Love towards GOD. Loving all Men in general, because GOD is loving to every Man, and loving good Men in particular, for the Grace we see in them, and because they love our Lord JESUS in Sincerity.

This is Christian Charity, and that new Commandment which CHRIST gave his Disciples. New not in its Object, but in the Motive and Example

Example whereon it is founded, even JESUS CHRIST. This is that Love which the primitive Christians were so renowned for, that it became a Proverb—*See, how these Christians love one another.*—And without this Love, tho' we should give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and our Bodies to be burnt, it would profit us nothing.

Farther, this Love is not confined to any particular Set of Men, but is impartial and catholic. A Love that embraces GOD's Image wherever it beholds it, and that delights in nothing so much as to see CHRIST's Kingdom come.

This is the Love wherewith JESUS CHRIST loved Mankind. — He loved all, even the worst of Men, as appears by his weeping over the obstinately perverse; but wherever he saw the least Appearance of the Divine Likeness, that Soul he loved in particular. — Thus we read, that when he heard the young Man say, *All these Things have I kept from my Youth*, that so far he loved him. And when he saw any noble Instance of Faith, though in a *Centurion*, a *Syro-phenician*, Aliens to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, how is he said to marvel at it, as Man, to rejoice in it, speak of, and commend it?—So also every spiritual Disciple of JESUS CHRIST will cordially embrace all that worship GOD in Spirit and in Truth, howsoever they may differ as to the Appendages of Religion, and Things not essentially necessary to Salvation.

I confess indeed, that the Heart of a natural Man is not thus enlarged all at once; and a Person may really receive the HOLY GHOST (as *Peter* no doubt had when he was unwilling to go to *Cornelius*) though he be not arrived to this.— But then we affirm, where a Person is truly in
CHRIST,

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CHRIST, all Narrowness of Spirit decreases in him daily; the Partition-Wall of Bigotry and Party Zeal is broken down more and more; and the nearer he comes to Heaven, the more his Heart is enlarged with that Love which there will make no Difference between any People, Nation or Language, but we shall all with one Heart, and one Voice, sing Praises to him that sitteth upon the Throne for ever.

But I hasten to shew a *Fifth*, and that the last Scripture Mark of our *New-Birth*, that I shall at present mention,—Loving our Enemies.

I say unto you, says JESUS CHRIST, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to those that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.—And this Duty of loving our Enemies is so necessary, that without it, our blessed LORD tells us, our Righteousness does not exceed the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, nay, or of *Publicans* and Sinners: For if you do Good to them only which do Good to you, what do you more than others? What do you extraordinary? Do not even the *Publicans* the same?—And these Precepts our LORD confirmed by his own Example, when he wept over the bloody City; when he suffered himself to be led as a Sheep to the Slaughter; when he made that mild Reply to the Traitor *Judas*, *Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss?*—And more especially when in the Agonies and Pangs of Death, he prayed for his very Murderers, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

This is a most difficult Duty to the natural Man, but whosoever is made Partaker of that Promise of the Father, will find it practicable and easy. For if we are born again of GOD, we must be like him; and consequently delight
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to be perfect in this Duty of doing Good to our worst Enemies in the same Manner, though not in the same Degree, as he is perfect.—And he sends his Rain on the Evil and the Good, causeth his Sun to shine on the Just and Unjust: And herein more especially commendeth his Love towards us, that whilst we were his Enemies, he sent forth his Son, born of a Woman, made under the Law, that he might become a Curse for us.

Many other Marks there are scattered up and down the Scriptures, whereby we may know whether or not we have received the HOLY GHOST. Such as, *to be carnally minded is Death, but to be spiritually minded is Life and Peace.*—*Now the Fruits of the Spirit are Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Meekness,* with a Multitude of Texts to the same Purpose.—But as most, if not all of them, are comprehended in the Duties already laid down, I dare affirm, whosoever, upon an impartial Examination, can find the aforesaid Marks upon his Soul, may be as certain, as tho' an Angel was to tell him, that his Pardon is sealed in Heaven.

And as for my own Part, I had rather see these Divine Graces, these Heavenly Tempers stamped upon my Soul, than to hear an Angel from Heaven saying unto me, *Son, be of good cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee.*

For these are infallible Witnesses; these are *Emanuel*, GOD with and in us; these make up that white Stone, which none knoweth, saving he who receiveth it; these are the Earnests of the Heavenly Inheritance in our Hearts. In short, these are Glory begun, and are that good Thing, that better Part, which neither Men or Devils shall ever be able to take from us.

III. I proceed now, as was proposed, in the *Third Place*, to make an Application of the Doctrine delivered, to several distinct Classes of Professors.

And *First*, I shall address myself to those who are dead in Trespasses and Sins.— And here how could I weep over you, as our LORD wept over *Jerusalem!* For alas! how distant must you be from GOD! what a prodigious Work have you got to finish! who instead of praying Day and Night, seldom or never pray at all! And instead of being born again in GOD, so as not to commit Sin, are so deeply sunk into the Nature of Devils, as to make a Mock at it. Or instead of overcoming the World, so as not to follow or be led by it, are continually making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof. And lastly, instead of being endued with the Godlike Dispositions of loving all Men, even your Enemies, have your Hearts full of Hatred, Malice, and Revenge, and deride those who are sincere Followers of the lowly JESUS.— But think you, O Sinners, that GOD will admit such polluted Wretches into his Sight? Or should he admit you, do you imagine you could take any Pleasure in him? No, Heaven itself would be no Heaven to you: The devilish Dispositions which are in your Hearts would render all the spiritual Enjoyments of those blessed Mansions ineffectual to make you happy.— To qualify you to be blissful Partakers of that Heavenly Inheritance with the Saints in Light, there is a Meetness required, to attain which ought to be the one Business of your Lives.

It is true, you, as well as the Righteous, in one Sense, shall see GOD (for we must all appear

pear before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST) but you must see him once, never to see him more. For as you carry about in you the Devil's Image, with Devils you must dwell. Being of the same Nature, you must share the same Doom. Repent therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. See that you receive the HOLY GHOST before you go hence: For otherwise, how can you escape the Damnation of Hell?

Secondly, I shall apply myself to those who deceive themselves with false Hopes of Salvation. And because, through the Influence of a good Education, or other providential Restraints, they have not run into the same Excess of Riot with other Men, think they have no Need to receive the HOLY GHOST, and flatter themselves that they are really born again.

But do you shew it by bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit? Do you pray without ceasing? Do you not commit Sin? Have you overcome the World? And do you love your Enemies, and all Mankind, in the same Manner as JESUS CHRIST loved them?

If these Things, Brethren, be in you, and abound, then may you have Confidence towards GOD: But if not, altho' you may be civilized, yet you are not converted. No, you are yet in your Sins. The Nature of the old *Adam* still reigneth in your Souls. And unless the Nature of the second *Adam* be engrafted in its Room, you can never see GOD.

Think not therefore to dress yourselves up in the Ornaments of a good Nature, and civil Education, and say with *Agag*, surely the Bitterness of Death is past. For GOD's Justice, notwith-

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standing that, like *Samuel*, shall hew you to Pieces.—However you may be highly esteemed in the Sight of Men, yet in the Sight of GOD you are but like the Apples of *Sodom*, Dunghills covered over with Snow, mere whited Sepulchres, appearing a little beautiful without, but inwardly full of Corruption, and of all Uncleanliness.—And consequently will be dismissed at the last Day, with a *Verily I know you not*.

But the Word is profitable for Comfort, as well as Correction.

Thirdly, therefore, do I address myself to those who are under the Drawings of the Father, and are going through the Spirit of Bondage, but not finding the Marks before-mentioned, are ever crying out, *Who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death?*

Despair not; for notwithstanding your present Trouble, it may be the Divine Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

The Grace of GOD, thro' JESUS CHRIST, is able to deliver you, and give you what you want; even you may receive the Spirit of Adoption, the Promise of the Father.—All Things are possible with him, persevere therefore in seeking,--and determine to find no Rest in your Spirit, 'till you know and feel that you are thus born again from above, and GOD's Spirit witnesseth with your Spirits, that you are the Children of GOD.

Fourthly and lastly, I address myself to those who have received the HOLY GHOST in all its sanctifying Graces, and are almost ripe for Glory.

Hail happy Saints! For your Heaven is begun on Earth.—You have already received the first Fruits of the Spirit, and are patiently waiting till
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that blessed Change come, when your Harvest shall be compleat. — I see and admire you, tho' alas! at so great a Distance from you. — Your Life, I know, is hid with CHRIST in GOD. — You have Comforts, you have Meat to eat, which a sinful, carnal, ridiculing World knows nothing of. — CHRIST's Yoke is now become easy to you, and his Burden light: You have passed through the Pangs of the *New-Birth*, and now rejoice that CHRIST JESUS is formed in your Hearts. You know what it is to dwell in CHRIST, and CHRIST in you. Like *Jacob's Ladder*, although your Bodies are on Earth, yet your Souls and Hearts are in Heaven: And by your Faith and constant Recollection, like the Blessed Angels, you do always behold the Face of your Father which is in Heaven.

I need not then exhort you to press forward: For you know, that in walking by the Spirit there is great Reward. Rather will I exhort you in Patience to possess your Souls yet a little while, and JESUS CHRIST will deliver you from the Burden of the Flesh, and an abundant Entrance shall be administered unto you into the eternal Joy and uninterrupted Felicity of his Heavenly Kingdom.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, thro' O JESUS CHRIST our LORD; to whom with God the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, Three Persons and One GOD, be ascribed all Honour, Power, and Glory, for ever and ever.

S E R M O N XII.

The Power of CHRIST'S
RESURRECTION.

PHILIP. iii. 10.

*That I may know Him, and the Power of
His Resurrection.*

THE Apostle, in the Verses going before the Text, had been cautioning the *Philippians* to beware of the Concission, i. e. of some *Judaizing Teachers*, who endeavoured to subvert the Simplicity of the Gospel, by telling them, they still ought to be subject to Circumcision, and all the other Ordinances of *Moses*. — And that they might not think he spoke out of Prejudice, and condemned their Tenets, because he himself was a Stranger to the *Jewish Dispensation*, he acquaints them, that if any other Man thought that he had whereof he might trust in the Flesh, i. e. seek to be justified by the outward Privileges of the *Jews*, he had more. For he was circumcised the eighth Day, of the Stock of *Israel*, i. e. not a Proselyte, but a native *Israelite*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*; the Tribe which adhered to *Judah* when the others revolted; an

Hebrew

Hebrew of the *Hebrews*; a *Jew* both on the Father's and Mother's Side; as touching the Law, a *Pharisee*, the strictest Sect amongst all *Israel*.— And to shew that he was no *Gallio* in Religion, on account of his great, though misguided Zeal, he had persecuted the Church of CHRIST; and as touching the Righteousness of the Law, as far as the *Pharisees* Exposition of it went, he was blameless, and had kept it from his Youth.— But, says he, when it pleased GOD, who separated me from my Mother's Womb, to reveal his Son in me, what Things were Gain to me, those Privileges I boasted myself in, and sought to be justified by, I counted Loss for CHRIST. And that they might not think that it repented him that he had done so, he tells them, he was now more confirmed than ever in his Judgment. For, says he, yea doubtless (the Expression in the Original rises with a holy Triumph) and even now I count all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD.— And that they might not object that he said and did not, he acquaints them, he had given Proofs of the Sincerity of these Professions, because for the Sake of them, he had suffered the Loss of all his worldly Things, and still was willing to do more; for, says he, I count them but Dung (no more than Offals thrown out to Dogs) so that I may win, or have a saving Interest in CHRIST, and be found in him (as the Manslayer in the City of Refuge) not having my own Righteousness which is of the Law, not depending on having *Abraham* for my Father, or any Works of Righteousness which I have done, either to atone or serve as a Balance for my evil Deeds, but that which is through the Faith of

CHRIST, the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith, *i. e.* a Righteousness of GOD's appointing, and which will be imputed to me, if I believe in CHRIST,—that I may know him, *i. e.* CHRIST, and the Power of his Resurrection; that I may have an experimental Knowledge of the Efficacy of his Resurrection, by feeling the Influences of his Blessed Spirit on my Soul.—In which Words two Things are implied.

First, That JESUS CHRIST did rise from the Dead.

Secondly, That it highly concerns us to know the Power of his Rising again.

Accordingly, in the following Discourse I shall endeavour to shew,

First, That CHRIST is risen indeed from the Dead; and that it was necessary for him so to do; and,

Secondly, That it highly concerns us to know and experience the Power of his Resurrection.

That JESUS should rise from the Dead was absolutely necessary; first on his own Account—For he had often appealed to this as the last and most convincing Proof he would give them that he was the true Messiah,—*There shall no other Sign be given you, says he, than the Sign of the Prophet Jonas.*—And again, *Destroy this Temple of my Body, and in three Days I will build it up.*—Which Words his Enemies remembered, and urged it as an Argument, to induce Pilate to grant them a Watch, to prevent his being stolen out of the Grave.—*We know that that Deceiver said, whilst He was yet alive, After three Days I will*

will rise again.—So that had he not risen again, they might have justly said, We know that this Man was an Impostor.

Secondly, It was necessary on our Account.—

He rose again, says the Apostle, *for our Justification*; i. e. that the Debt we owed to GOD for our Sins might be fully satisfied and discharged.

It had pleased the Father (for ever adored be his infinite Love and free Grace) to wound his only Son for our Transgressions, and to arrest and confine him in the Prison of the Grave, as our Surety for the Guilt we had contracted by setting at nought his Commandments.—Now had CHRIST continued always in the Grave, we could have had no more Assurance that our Sins were satisfied for, than any common Debtor can have of his Creditor's being satisfied whilst his Surety is kept confined. — But he being released from the Power of Death, we are thereby assured, that in his Sacrifice GOD was well pleased, — that our Attonement was finished on the Cross, — and that he had made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the World.

Thirdly, It was necessary that our Lord JESUS should rise again from the Dead, to assure us of the Certainty of the Resurrection of our own Bodies.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body was entirely exploded and set at nought among the *Gentiles*, as appears from the *Athenians* mocking at, and calling St. Paul a Babbler and a Setter forth of strange Doctrines, when he preached to them JESUS, and the Resurrection.—And tho' it was believed by most of the *Jews*, as is evident

from many Passages of Scripture; yet not by all; the whole Sect of the *Sadducees* denied it. But the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST put it out of Dispute.—For as he acted as our Representative, if he our Head be risen, then must we also, who are his Members, rise with him.—And as in the first *Adam* we all died; even so in him our second *Adam* we must all, in this Sense, be made alive.

As it was necessary, upon all these Accounts, that our Blessed LORD should rise from the Dead; so it is plain beyond Contradiction, that he did. Never was any Matter of Fact better attested. Never were more Precautions made use of to prevent a Cheat.—He was buried in a Sepulchre, hewn out of a Rock, so that it could not be said that any digged under, and conveyed him away. It was a Sepulchre also wherein never Man before was laid; so that if any Body did rise from thence, it must be the Body of JESUS of *Nazareth*.—Besides, the Sepulchre was sealed; a great Stone rolled to the Mouth of it; and a Band of Soldiers (consisting not of his Friends, but of his professed Enemies) was set to guard it.—And as for his Disciples coming by Night and stealing him away, it was altogether improbable: For it was not long since that they had all forsaken him, and they were the most backward in believing his Resurrection.—And supposing it was true, that they came whilst the Soldiers slept; yet the Soldiers must be cast into a deep Sleep indeed, that the rolling away so great a Stone did not awake some of them.

And our Blessed LORD's afterwards appearing at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, to his Disciples, when they were assembled together, when they were walking to *Emmaus*, when they were

were fishing; nay, and condescending to shew them his Hands and Feet, and his appearing to above five hundred Brethren at once, put the Truth of his Resurrection out of all Dispute.

Indeed there is one Objection that may be made against what has been said, — That the Books wherein these Facts are recorded were written by his Disciples.

And who more proper Persons than those who were Eye-Witnesses of what they related, and eat and drank with him after his Resurrection?

“ But they were illiterate and ignorant Men,” Yet as good Witnesses of a plain Matter of Fact, as the most learned Masters in *Israel*. — Nay, this rendered them more proper Witnesses. — For being plain Men, they were therefore less to be suspected of telling or making a Lye, — particularly, since they laid down their Lives for a Testimony of the Truth of it. We read indeed of *Jacob*’s telling a Lie, though he was a plain Man, in order to get his Father’s Blessing. But it was never heard since the World began, that any Man, much less a whole Set of Men, died Martyrs for the Sake of an Untruth, when they themselves were to reap no Advantage from it.

No, this single Circumstance proves them to be *Israelites* indeed, in whom was no Guile. — And the wonderful Success GOD gave to their Ministry afterwards, when three Thousand were converted by one Sermon, and twelve poor Fishermen, in a very short Time were enabled to be more than Conquerors over all the Opposition Men or Devils could make, was as plain a Demonstration, that CHRIST was risen, according to their Gospel, as that a Divine Power, at the

Sound of a few Ram's Horns, caused the Walls of *Jericho* to fall down.

But what need we any farther Witnesses? Believe you the Resurrection of our Blessed LORD? I know that you believe it, as your gathering together on this first Day of the Week in the Courts of the LORD's House abundantly testifies.

What concerns us most to be assured of, and which is the

Second Thing I was to speak to is,—Whether we have experimentally known the Power of his Resurrection; that is, *Whether or not we have received the Holy Ghost*, and by his powerful Operations on our Hearts been raised from the Death of Sin, to a Life of Righteousness and true Holiness.

It was this the great Apostle was chiefly desirous to know.—The Resurrection of CHRIST's Body he was satisfied would avail him nothing, unless he experienced the Power of it in raising his dead Soul.

For another, and that a chief End of our blessed LORD's rising from the Dead, was to enter Heaven as our Representative, and to send down the HOLY GHOST to apply that Redemption he had finished on the Cross to our Hearts, by working an entire Change in them.

Without this, CHRIST would have died in vain. For it would have done us no Service to have his outward Righteousness imputed to us, unless we had an inward inherent Righteousness wrought in us. — Because being altogether conceived and born in Sin, and consequently unfit to hold Communion with an infinitely pure and holy GOD, we cannot possibly be made meet to see

see or enjoy him, till a thorough Renovation has passed upon our Hearts.

Without this, we leave out the HOLY GHOST in the great Work of our Redemption. — But as we were made by the Joint Concurrence and Consultation of the blessed Trinity. And as we were baptized in their Name—So must all of them concur in rendring that Baptism effectual to our Salvation: As the Father made, and the Son redeemed, so must the Holy Ghost sanctify and seal us, or otherwise we have believed in vain.

This then is what the Apostle means by the Power of CHRIST's Resurrection, and this is what we are as much concerned experimentally to know, as that He rose at all.

Without this, though we may be Moralists; though we may be civilized, good-natured People, yet we are no Christians. — For he is not a true Christian, who is only one outwardly; nor have we therefore a right Faith, because we daily profess to believe that CHRIST rose again the third Day from the Dead. But he is a true Christian who is one inwardly; and then only can we be stiled true Believers, when we not only profess to believe, but have felt the Power of our blessed LORD's rising from the Dead, by being quickened and raised by his Spirit when dead in Trespases and Sins, to a thorough Newness both of Heart and Life.

The Devils themselves cannot but believe the Doctrine of the Resurrection, and tremble— But yet they continue Devils, because the Benefits of this Resurrection have not been applied to them, nor have they received a renovating Power from it to change and put off their Diabolical Nature. — And so likewise, unless we not only profess to

know, but also feel that **CHRIST** is risen in deed; by being born again from Above, we shall be as far from the Kingdom of **GOD** as they; our Faith will be as ineffectual as the Faith of Devils.

Nothing has done more Harm to the Christian World; nothing has rendered the Cross of **CHRIST** of less Effect, than a vain Supposition, that Religion is something without us—Whereas we should consider that every thing that **CHRIST** did outwardly, must be done over again in our Souls; or otherwise believing there was such a divine Person once on Earth, who triumphed over Hell and the Grave, will profit us no more, than believing there was once such a Person as *Alexander*, who conquered the World.

As **CHRIST** was born of the Virgin's Womb, so must he be spiritually formed in our Hearts.—As He died for Sin, so must we die to Sin—And as he rose again from the Dead, so must we also rise to a Divine Life.

None but those who have followed him in this Regeneration, or New-Birth, shall sit on Thrones as Approvers of his Sentence, when he shall come in terrible Majesty to judge the twelve Tribes of *Israel*.

'Tis true, as for the outward Work of our Redemption, it was a transient Act, and was certainly finished on the Cross—But the Application of that Redemption to our Hearts is a Work that will continue always, even unto the End of the World.

So long as there is an elect Man breathing on the Earth, who is naturally engendred of the Offspring of the first *Adam*, so long must the quickening

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ening Spirit, which was purchased by the Resurrection of the second *Adam*, that LORD from Heaven, be Breathing upon his Soul, *For tho' we may exist by CHRIST, yet we cannot be said to exist in him, till we are united to him by one Spirit, and enter into a new State of Things, as certainly as he entred into a new State of Things, after that he rose from the Dead.*

We may throng and crowd around about CHRIST, and call him LORD, LORD, when we come to worship before his Footstool; but we have not effectually touched him, till by a lively Faith in his Resurrection, we perceive a Divine Virtue coming out of him, to renew and purify our Souls.

How greatly then do they err who rest in a bare Historical Faith of our Saviour's Resurrection, and look only for external Proofs to evidence it? Whereas were we the most learned Disputers of this World, and could speak of the Certainty of this Fact with the Tongue of Men and Angels, yet without this inward Testimony of it in our Hearts, tho' we might convince others, yet we should never be saved by it ourselves.

*For we are but dead Men, we are but like so many Carcasses wrapt up in Grave Cloaths, till that same JESUS who called *Lazarus* from his Tomb, and at whose Resurrection many that slept arose, — raise us also by his quickening Spirit from our natural Death, in which we have so long lain, to a holy and heavenly Life.*

We might think ourselves happy, if we had seen the HOLY JESUS after He was risen from the Dead, and our Hands handled that LORD of Life. But more happy are they who have not seen

seen him, and yet having felt the Power of his Resurrection, therefore believe in him. — For many saw our Divine Master, who were not saved by him; but whosoever has thus felt the Power of his Resurrection, he has the Earnest of his Inheritance in his Heart, he has passed from Death to Life, and shall never fall into final Condemnation.

I am very sensible that this is Foolishness to the Natural Man, as were many such like Truths to our LORD's own Disciples, when only weak in Faith, before he rose again. But when these Natural Men, like them, have fully felt the Power of his Resurrection, they will then own that this Doctrine is from GOD, and say with the *Samaritans*, Now we believe not because of thy Saying, for we ourselves have experienced it in our Hearts.

And Oh that all Unbelievers, all Letter-learned Masters of *Israel*, who now look upon the Doctrine of the Power of CHRIST's Resurrection, or our New Birth, as an idle Tale, and condemn the Preachers of it as Enthusiasts and Madmen, did but thus feel the Power of it in their Souls, — they would no longer ask, How this Thing could be? — But they would be convinced of it as much as *Thomas* was, when he saw the LORD's CHRIST; and like him, when JESUS bid him reach out his Hands and thrust into his Side, in a holy Confusion they would cry out, *My LORD and my GOD!*

But how shall an Unbeliever, how shall the formal Christian come thus to know CHRIST, and the Power of his Resurrection? — That GOD, who cannot lye, has told us, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, says JESUS CHRIST, *who-*
ever

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ever liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—Again, says the Apostle, *By Faith we are saved, and that not of ourselves, it is the Gift of GOD.*

This, this is the Way, walk in it.—Believe, and you shall live in CHRIST, and CHRIST in you; you shall be one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with you.—But without this, your outward Goodness and Professions will avail you nothing.

But then by this Faith we are to understand not a dead speculative Faith, a Faith in the Head; but a living Principle wrought in the Heart by the powerful Operations of the Holy Ghost,—A Faith that will enable us to overcome the World, and forsake all in Affection for JESUS CHRIST. For thus speaks our Blessed Master, *Unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.*

And so the Apostle, in the Words immediately following the Text, says, *being made conformable to his Death*; thereby implying, that we cannot know the Power of CHRIST's Resurrection, unless we are made conformable to him in his Death.

This we have shadowed out by the Custom of Baptizing by Immersion in the Primitive Church, and (which is also recommended by our own) their putting the Infants under the Water, signified their Obligation to die unto Sin; as their taking them out of the Water, signified their rising again to Newness of Life. To which the Apostle plainly alludes, when he says, *We are buried with him in Baptism.*

If we can reconcile Light and Darkness, Heaven and Hell, then we may hope to know the
Power

Power of CHRIST'S Resurrection without dying to ourselves and the World. — But till we can do this, we might as well expect that CHRIST will have Concord with *Belial*.

For there is such a Contrariety between the Spirit of this World, and the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, that he who will be at Friendship with the one, must be at Enmity with the other. —

We cannot serve GOD and Mammon.

This may, indeed, seem a hard Saying; and many, with the young Man in the Gospel, may be tempted to go away sorrowful: But wherefore should this offend them? For what is all that is in the World, the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life, but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit?

GOD is LOVE; and therefore, could our own Wills, or the World, have made us happy, he never would have sent his own dear Son JESUS CHRIST to die and rise again, to deliver us from the Power of them. — But because they only torment, but cannot satisfy, therefore GOD bids renounce them.

Had any one persuaded profane *Esau* not to lose so glorious a Privilege merely for the Sake of gratifying a present corrupt Inclination, when he saw him about to sell his Birth-right for a little red Pottage, would not one think that Man was *Esau's* Friend? — And just thus stands the Case between GOD and us. — By the Death and Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST we are new-born to an Heavenly Inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified, but our own corrupt Wills would tempt us to sell this glorious Birth-right for the Vanities of the World, which, like *Esau's* red Pottage, may please us for a while, but will soon
be

be taken away from us. — GOD knows this, and therefore bids us rather renounce them for a Season, than for the short Enjoyment of them lose the Privilege of that glorious Birth-right, to which, by knowing the Power of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, we are entitled.

Oh the Depth of the Riches and Excellency of Christianity! Well might the great St. Paul count all Things but Dung and Dross for the Excellency of the Knowledge of it. — Well might he desire so ardently to know JESUS, and the Power of his Resurrection. — For even on this side Eternity it raises us above the World, and makes us fit in Heavenly Places in CHRIST JESUS.

Well might that glorious Company of Worthies, recorded in the Holy Scriptures, supported with a deep Sense of their Heavenly Calling, despise the Pleasures and Profits of this Life, and wander about in Sheep-Skins, and Goat-Skins, in Dens and Caves of the Earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

And oh that we were all like minded! that we felt the Power of CHRIST's Resurrection as they did! How should we then count all Things as Dung and Dross for the Excellency of the Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS, our LORD! How should we then recover our primitive Dignity, trample Earth under our Feet, and with our Souls be continually gasping after GOD.

And what hinders but we may be thus minded? Is JESUS CHRIST, our great High Priest, altered from what he was? No, he is the same Yesterday, to Day, and forever. — And though he is exalted to the Right Hand of GOD, yet he is not ashamed to call us Brethren. — The Power of his Resurrection is as great now as formerly, and

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and the Holy Spirit, which was assured to us by his Resurrection, as ready and able to quicken us who are dead in Trespases and Sins, as any Saint that ever lived. Let us but cry, and that instantly, to him that is mighty and able to save.—Let us, in Sincerity and Truth, without secretly keeping back the least Part, renounce ourselves and the World—And then we shall be Christians indeed.—And though the World may cast us out, and separate from our Company, yet JESUS CHRIST will walk with and abide in us.—And at the general Resurrection of the last Day, when the Voice of the Archangel and Trump of GOD shall bid the Sea and the Graves give up their Dead, and all Nations shall appear before him, then will he confess us before his Father and the Holy Angels, and we shall receive that Sentence which he shall then pronounce to all that love and fear him, saying, *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World.*

Grant this, O FATHER, for the same thy dear Son's Sake, JESUS CHRIST our L O R D, to whom with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, &c.

S E R.

S E R M O N XIII.

The DUTY of Searching the SCRIPTURES.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the SCRIPTURES.

WHEN the Sadducees came to our Blessed LORD, and put to him the Question, *Whose Wife a Woman should be in the next Life, who had seven Husbands in this?* He told them, *they erred, not knowing the Scriptures.* — And if we would know whence all the Errors that have overspread the Church of CHRIST, first arose, we should find they, in a great Measure, flowed from the same Fountain, viz. *An Ignorance of the Word of GOD.*

Our Blessed LORD, though he was the Eternal God, yet, as Man, made it his constant Rule and Guide. — And therefore, when he was asked by the Lawyer, *Which was the great Commandment of the Law?* He referred him to his Bible for an Answer, *What readeſt thou?* — And thus, when led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil, he repelled all his Assaults, with *It is written.*

A suffi-

A sufficient Confutation this of their Opinion, who say, "The Spirit only, and not the Spirit by the Word, is to be our Rule of Action." — If so, our Saviour, who had the Spirit without Measure, needed not always have referred to the written Word.

But how few copy after the Example of CHRIST? How many are there, who do not regard the Word of GOD at all, but throw the Sacred Oracles aside, as an antiquated Book, fit only for unlearned and illiterate Men?

Such Men do greatly err, not knowing what the Scriptures are, and for what they are designed.

I shall therefore, in the following Discourse,

I. *First*, shew that it is every one's Duty to search them. And,

II. *Secondly*, lay down some Directions how to search them with Advantage.

By the Scriptures I understand the Law and the Prophets, and all those Books which have in all Ages been accounted Canonical, and which make up that Book commonly called, *The Bible*.

These are emphatically stiled *The Scriptures*; and in one Place, *The Scriptures of Truth*, as though no other Books deserved the Name of true Writings or Scriptures in Comparison of them.

They are not of any private Interpretation, Authority, or Invention, but Holy Men of old wrote them, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Foundation of GOD's revealing himself thus to Mankind, was our Fall in *Adam*, and the Necessity of our *New Birth* in CHRIST JESUS.

And

And if we search the Scriptures as we ought, we shall find the Sum and Substance, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and End of them, has no other Tendency but to lead us to a Knowledge of these two great Truths.

All the Threats, Promises, and Precepts; all the Exhortations and Doctrines contained therein; all the Rites, and Ceremonies, and Sacrifices appointed under the *Jewish Law*; nay, almost all the Historical Parts of Holy Scripture, suppose our being fallen in *Adam*, and either point out to us a Mediator to come, or speak of him as already come in the Flesh.

Had Man continued in a State of Innocence, he would not have needed an outward Revelation, because the Law of GOD was so deeply written in the Tables of his Heart. But having eaten of the forbidden Fruit, he incurred the Divine Displeasure, and lost the Divine Image, and therefore, without an outward Revelation, could never tell how GOD would be reconciled unto him, or how he should be saved from the Misery and Darkness of his fallen Nature.

That these Truths are so, I need not refer you to any other Book than that of your own Hearts.

For unless we are fallen Creatures, whence come those abominable Corruptions which daily arise in our Hearts? We could not come thus corrupt out of the Hands of our Maker, because he being Goodness itself, could make nothing but what is like himself, Holy, Just, and Good. And that we want to be delivered from these Disorders of our Nature is evident, because we find an Unwillingness within ourselves to own we are thus depraved, and are always striving to appear

to

to others of a quite different Frame and Temper of Mind, than what we are.

I appeal to the Experience of the most learned Disputer against Divine Revelation, whether he does not find in himself that he is naturally Proud, Angry, Revengeful, and full of other Tempers, contrary to the Purity, Holiness, and Long-suffering of GOD.—And is not this a demonstrable Proof, that some Way or other he is fallen from GOD? — And I appeal also, whether at the same Time he finds these Hellish Tempers in his Heart, he does not strive to seem Amiable, Courteous, Kind, and Affable; and is not this as manifest a Proof that he is sensible that he is miserable, and wants, he knows not how, to be redeemed or delivered from it?

Here then GOD, by his Word, steps in, and opens to his View such a Scene of Divine Love, and infinite Goodness, in the Holy Scriptures, that none but Men of such corrupt and reprobate Minds as our modern Deists, would shut their Eyes against it.

For what does GOD in his written Word do more or less, than shew thee, O Man, how thou art fallen into that Blindness, Darkness, and Misery thou feelest and complaineest of? And at the same Time points out the Way to what thou desirest, *viz.* How thou mayst be redeemed out of it, — by believing in, and copying after the Son of his Love.

For, as I told you before, so I tell you again, upon these two Truths hangs all Divine Revelation. It being given us for no other End but to shew us our Misery, and our Happiness; our Fall and Recovery; or, in one Word, after what Manner

Manner we died in *Adam*, and how in *CHRIST*, we may again be made alive.

Hence then arises the Necessity of searching the Scriptures. For since they are nothing else but the grand Charter of our Salvation, a Revelation of a Covenant made by *GOD* with Man in *CHRIST*, a Light to guide them into the Way of Peace: It follows, that all are obliged to read and search them, because all are equally fallen from *GOD*, all equally stand in need of being informed what they must do to be restored to, and again united with him.

How foolishly then do the disputing Infidels of this Generation act, who are continually either calling for Signs from Heaven, or seeking for outward Evidence to prove the Truth of Divine Revelation? Whereas what they so earnestly seek for is nigh unto, nay, within them. For let them but consult their own Hearts, they cannot but feel what they want.—Let them but consult the lively Oracles of *GOD*, and they cannot but see a Remedy revealed for all their Wants, and that the written Word does as exactly answer the Wants and Desire of their Hearts, as Face answers to Face in the Water.—Where then is the Scribe, where then is the Wise, where is the Solidity of the Reasoning of the Disputers of this World? Has not *GOD* revealed himself unto them as plain as their own Hearts could wish? And yet they require a Sign. But there shall no other Sign be given them. For if they believe not a Revelation every way so suited to their Wants, neither will they be persuaded, though one should rise from the Dead.

But this Discourse is not designed so much for them that believe not, as for them who both
know

know and believe that the Scriptures contain a Revelation that came from GOD, and that it is their Duty, as being chief Parties concerned, not only to read, but search them also.

I pass on therefore, as was proposed, in the second Place, to lay down some Directions how to search them with Advantage.

And *First*, Have always in View, the End for which the Scriptures were written,—to shew us the Way of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST.

Search the Scriptures, says our Blessed LORD, *for they are they that testify of me.*—Look therefore always for CHRIST in the Scripture. For he is the Treasure hid in the Field, both of the Old and New Testament.—In the Old you'll find him hid under Prophecies, Types, Sacrifices, and Shadows; in the New, manifested in the Flesh.

Have CHRIST thus always in View when you are reading the Word of GOD, and this, like the Star in the East, will guide you to the *Messiah*, will serve as a Key to every Thing that is obscure, and unlock to you the Wisdom and Riches of all the Mysteries of the Kingdom of GOD.

Secondly, Search the Scriptures with an humble Child-like Disposition.

For whosoever does not read them with this Temper shall in no wise enter into the Knowledge of the Things contained therein. For GOD hides the Sense of them from those that are wise and prudent in their own Eyes, and reveals them only to Babes in CHRIST, who think they know nothing yet as they ought to know, who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and humbly desire to be fed with the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.

Fancy yourselves therefore, when you are searching the Scriptures, especially when you are reading the New Testament, to be with *Mary*, sitting at the Feet of the HOLY JESUS, and be as willing to learn what GOD shall teach you, as *Samuel* was, when he said, *Speak, LORD, for thy Servant beareth.*

And Oh that the Unbelievers would pull down every high Thought and Imagination that exalts itself against the Revealed Will of GOD! Oh that they would, like new-born Babes, desire to be fed with the pure Milk of the Word! then we should have them no longer scoffing at Divine Revelation; nor would they read the Bible any more (with the same Intent the *Philistines* brought out *Sampson*) to make Sport at it, but they would see the Divine Image and Superscription written upon every Line of it. They would hear GOD speaking unto their Souls by it, and consequently be built up in the Knowledge and Fear of him who is the Author of it.

Thirdly, Search the Scriptures with a sincere Intention to put in Practice what you read.

For a Desire to do the Will of GOD is the only Way to know it, *If any Man will do my Will, says JESUS CHRIST, He shall know of my Doctrine whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of myself.* As he also speaks in another Place to his Disciples; *To you, who are willing to practise your Duty, it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of GOD; but to those that are without, who only want to raise Cavils against my Doctrine, all these Things are spoken in Parables, that seeing they may see and not understand, and hearing they may hear and not perceive.*

For it is but just in God to send those strong Delusions, that they may believe a Lye, and to conceal the Knowledge of himself from all such as do not seek him with a single Intention.

JESUS CHRIST is the same now as formerly. To those who desire to know from his Word, who he is that they may believe on and live by and to him, he will reveal himself as clearly as he did to the Woman of *Samaria*, when he said, *I that speak to thee am he*; or as he did to the Man that was born blind, whom the *Jews* had cast out for his Name's sake, *He that talketh with thee is he*. But to those who consult his Word, with a Desire neither to know him or keep his Commandments, but either merely for their Entertainment, or to scoff at the Simplicity of the Manner in which he is revealed; to those, I say, he never will reveal himself, though they should search the Scriptures to all Eternity.—As he never would tell those whether he was the *Messiah* or not, who put that Question to him, either out of Curiosity, or that they might have whereof to accuse him.

Fourthly, In order to search the Scriptures still more effectually, make an Application of every Thing you read to your own Hearts.

For whatever was written in the Book of God, was written for our Learning. And what CHRIST said unto those aforetime, we must look upon as spoken to us also: For since the Holy Scriptures are nothing but a Revelation from God, how fallen Man is to be restored by JESUS CHRIST, all the Precepts, Threats and Promises, belong to us and to our Children, as well as to those to whom they were immediately made known.

Thus the Apostle, when he tells us that *he lived by the Faith of the Son of GOD*, adds, *who died and gave himself for me*. For it is this Application of JESUS CHRIST to our Hearts, that makes his Redemption effectual to each of us.

And it is this Application of all the Doctrinal and Historical Parts of Scripture, when we are reading them over, that must render them profitable to us, as they were designed for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, and make every Child of GOD perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good Work.

And I dare appeal to the Experience of every Spiritual Reader of Holy Writ, whether or no if he consulted the Word of GOD in this Manner, he was not at all Times, and at all Seasons, as plainly directed how to act, as though he had consulted the *Urim and Thumim* which was upon the *High Priest's* Breast.

For this is the Way GOD now reveals himself to Man: Not by making new Revelations, but by applying general Things that are revealed already, to every particular sincere Reader's Heart.

And this, by the Way, answers an Objection made by those that say * "the Word of GOD is not a perfect Rule of Action, because it cannot direct us how to act, or how to determine in particular Cases, or what Place to go to when we are in Doubt, and therefore the Spirit, and not the Word, is to be our Rule of Action."

But this I deny, and affirm, on the contrary, that GOD at all Times, Circumstances and Places, though never so minute, never so particular, will

* See *Barclay's Apology*.

if we diligently seek the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, apply general Things to our Hearts, and thereby, to use the Words of the Holy JESUS, will lead us into all Truth, and give us the particular Assistance we want: But this leads me to a

Fifth Direction how to search the Scriptures with Profit. Labour to attain that Spirit by which they were wrote.

For the natural Man discerneth not the Words of the Spirit of GOD, because they are spiritually discerned, the Words that CHRIST hath spoken they are Spirit, and they are Life, and can be no more understood, as to the true hidden Sense and Meaning of them, by the mere natural Man, than a Person, who had never learnt a Language, can understand another speaking in it. The Scriptures therefore have not unfitly been compared by some to the Cloud which went before the *Israelites*, they are dark and hard to be understood by the natural Man, as the Cloud appeared dark to the *Egyptians*, but they are Light, they are Life to Christians indeed, as that same Cloud which seem'd dark to *Pharaoh* and his Host, appeared bright and altogether glorious to the *Israel* of GOD.

It was the Want of the Assistance of this Spirit that made *Nicodemus*, a Teacher of *Israel*, Ruler of the *Jews*, so utterly ignorant in the Doctrine of *Regeneration*. For being only a natural Man, he could not tell how that Thing could be. And it is because the natural Vell is not taken off from their Hearts, that so many who pretend to search the Scriptures, yet see no farther than into the bare Letter of them; and continue entire Strangers to the hidden Sense, the Spiritual Meaning,
couched

couched under every Parable, and contained in almost all the Precepts of the Book of God.

And indeed, how should it be otherwise? for God being a Spirit, he cannot communicate himself any otherwise than in a spiritual Manner to the Hearts of Men; and consequently, if we are Strangers to his Spirit, we must continue Strangers to his Word, because it is altogether like himself, Spiritual. Labour therefore earnestly to attain this blessed Spirit, for otherwise your Understandings will never be opened to understand the Scriptures aright; and because Prayer is one of the most immediate Means to get his Holy Spirit.

Sixthly, Let me advise you, before you read the Scripture, to pray that CHRIST, according to his Promise, would send his Spirit to guide you into all Truth; intersperse short Ejaculations whilst you are engaged in Reading; pray over every Word and Verse, if possible; and when you close up the Book, most earnestly beseech God, that the Words which you then have read may be inwardly engrafted into your Hearts, and bring forth in you the Fruits of Good Living.

Do this, and you will, with an holy Violence, draw down GOD's Holy Spirit into your Hearts, and you will experience his gracious Influences, and feel him enlightening, quickening, and inflaming your Souls by the Word of God; you will then not only read, but mark, learn, and inwardly digest what you read, and the Word of God will be Meat indeed and Drink indeed unto your Souls; you then will be as *Apollos* was, powerful in the Scriptures, be *Scribes* ready instructed to the Kingdom of God, and bring out of the good Treasures of your Heart, Things

both from the Old and New Testament, to entertain all you converse with. *One Direction more, which shall be the last. Seventhly, Read the Scripture constantly, or to use our Saviour's Expression in the Text, Search the Scriptures,* dig in them as for hid Treasure; for here's a manifest Allusion to those who dig in Mines, and our Saviour would thereby teach us, that we must take as much Pains in constantly reading his Word, if we would grow thereby, as those who dig for Gold and Silver. The Scriptures contain the Deep Things of God, and therefore can never be sufficiently search'd into by a careless, superficial, cursory Way of Reading them, but by an industrious, close, and humble Application. The Psalmist, therefore, makes it the Property of a good Man, that he meditates on God's Law Day and Night: *And this Book of the Law, says God to Josuah, shall not go out of thy Mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein Day and Night; for then thou shalt make thy Way prosperous, and when thou shalt have good Success, Search therefore the Scriptures, not only devoutly, but daily, for in them are the Words of eternal Life; wait constantly at Wisdom's Gate, and she will then, and not till then, display and lay open to you her Heavenly Treasures. You that are rich are without Excuse if you do not, and you that are poor ought to take heed to improve that little Time you have; for by the Scriptures you are to be acquitted, and by the Scriptures you are to be condemned at the Last Day.* But perhaps you have no Taste for this despised Book; perhaps Plays and Romances, Books of polite Entertainment, suit your Taste better; but

if this be your Case, give me leave to tell you, your Taste is vitiated, and unless corrected by the Spirit and Word of GOD, you shall never enter into his heavenly Kingdom; for unless you delight in GOD here, how will you be made meet to dwell with him hereafter? — Is it a Sin then, you will say, to read useless impertinent Books? I answer, yes: And that for the same Reason, as it is a Sin to indulge useless Conversation, because both immediately tend to grieve and quench that Spirit by which alone we can be sealed to the Day of Redemption! But you may reply, *How shall we know this?* Why, put in Practice the Precept in the Text, *Search the Scriptures*, in the Manner that has been recommended, and then you will be convinced of the Danger, Sinfulness, and Unsatisfactoriness of reading any other than the Book of GOD, or such as are wrote in the same Spirit; you will then say, When I was a Child, and ignorant of the Excellency of the Word of GOD, I read other, what the World calls harmless Books, as other Children in Knowledge, though old in Years, have done, and still do; but now I have tasted the good Word of Life, and come to a more perfect Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD; I put away these childish trifling Things, and am determined to read no other Books but what directly lead me to a Knowledge of myself and CHRIST JESUS. *Search therefore the Scriptures*, my dear Brethren; taste and see how good the Word of GOD is, and then you will never leave that Heavenly Manna, that Angel's Food, to feed on those dry Husks, that light Bread, those trifling, sinful Compositions, which Men of false Taste delight themselves in; no, you will then disdain such

poor Entertainment, and blush that yourselves once were fond of it. The Word of GOD will then be sweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb, and dearer than Gold and Silver; your Souls, by reading it, will be filled, as it were, with Marrow and Fatness, and your Hearts insensibly moulded into the Spirit of its blessed Author. In short, *You will then be guided by GOD's Wisdom here, and conducted by the Light of his Divine Word into Glory hereafter. Even so, LORD JESUS. Amen.*

S E R

SERMON XIV.

SATAN'S DEVICES.

2 CORINTH. II. II.

Lest Satan should get an Advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his Devices.

THE Occasion of these Words was as follows: In the Church of Corinth there was an unhappy Person, who had committed such Incest, as was not so much as named among the Gentiles, in taking his Father's Wife; but either on account of his Wealth, Power, or some such Reasons, like many notorious Offenders now-a-days, had not been exposed to the Censures of the Church. St. Paul, therefore, in his first Epistle, severely chides them for this Neglect of Discipline, and commands them, in the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, *When they were gathered together, to deliver such a one, whoever he was, to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit might be saved in the Day of the LORD*; that is, in one Word, that they should solemnly excommunicate him; which was commonly attended with some bodily Disease inflicted by the Devil, under whose Power the excommunicated Person was, for some Time, delivered. The Corinthians, being obedient to the Apostle, as dear Children, no sooner received this Reproof, but they submitted to it, and cast

the offending Party out of the Church. But whilst they were endeavouring to amend one Fault, they unhappily run into another; and as they formerly had been too mild and remiss, so now they behaved towards him with too much Severity and Resentment. The Apostle therefore, in this Chapter, reproves this, and tells them, that sufficient to the Offender's Shame, was the Punishment which had been inflicted of many; that he had now suffered enough; and that therefore, lest he should be tempted to say with Cain, *My Punishment is greater than I can bear*; or to use the Apostle's own Words, *Lest he should be swallowed up with over-much Sorrow*; they ought, now he had given Proof of his Repentance, to forgive him, to confirm their Love towards him, and so restore him in the Spirit of Meekness; *Lest Satan*, says he, *to whose Buffetings he was now given, should, by tempting him to Despair, get an Advantage over us*; and so, by representing you as merciless and cruel, cause that Holy Name to be blasphemed, by which you are called; *for we are not ignorant of his Devices*: we know very well how many subtle Ways he has to draw aside and beguile unguarded unthinking Men.

Thus then stand the Words in Relation to the Context; but as Satan has many Devices, and as his Quiver is full of other poisonous Darts, besides those which he shoots at us to drive us to Despair, I shall consider them by themselves, and in the following Discourse shall,

- I. *First*, Briefly observe who we are to understand by Satan. And,
- II. *Secondly*, Point out to you, what are the chief Devices he generally makes use of, to draw

draw off Converts from CHRIST, and prescribe some Remedies against them.

The Word *Satan*, in its original Signification, means an Adversary; and in its general Acceptation, is made use of to point out to us the Chief of the Devils, who, for striving to be as GOD, was cast down from Heaven, and is now permitted, *with the rest of his spiritual Wickednesses in high Places, to walk up and down, seeking whom he may devour.* We hear of him immediately after the Creation, when in the Shape of a Serpent he lay in wait to deceive our first Parents.—He is called *Satan* in the Book of *Job*; wherein we are told, that *when the Sons of GOD came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan also came amongst them.*—As the Scripture also speaketh in the Book of *Chronicles*; and *Satan moved David to number the People.*—In the New Testament he goes under different Denominations; sometimes he is called the *Evil One*, because he is evil in himself, and tempts us to Evil.—Sometimes, *the Prince of the Power of the Air*, and *the Spirit that now ruleth in the Children of Disobedience*, because he resides chiefly in the Air; and the whole World, *i. e.* All that are not born of GOD, are said to lie in him.

He is an Enemy to GOD and Goodness.—He is a Hater of all Truth; why else did he slander GOD in Paradise? Why did he tell *Eve*, *You shall not surely die?* And why did he promise to give all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glories of them, to JESUS CHRIST, if he would fall down and worship him?

He is full of Malice, Envy, and Revenge; for what other Motives could induce him to molest innocent Man in Paradise? And why is he still

so restless in his Attempts to destroy us, who have done him no Wrong?

He is a Being of great Power, as appears in his being able to act on the Imagination of our Blessed LORD, so as to represent to him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glories of them, in a Moment of Time. As also in carrying his sacred Body through the Air up to a Pinnacle of the Temple; and his driving a Herd of Swine so furiously into the Deep. — Nay, so great is his Might, that, I doubt not, was GOD to let him use his full Strength, but he could turn the Earth upside down, or pull the Sun from its Orb.

But what he is most remarkable for is, *his Subtlety*; for not having Power given from above to take us by Force, he is obliged to wait for Opportunities to betray us, and to catch us by Guile. He therefore made use of the Serpent, which was subtle above all the Beasts of the Field, in order to tempt our first Parents; and accordingly he is said, in the *New Testament*, *To lie in wait to deceive*; and here, in the Words of the Text, the Apostle says, *We are not ignorant of his Devices*; thereby implying, that we are more in Danger of being seduced by his Policy, than over-borne by his Power.

From this short Description of *Satan*, we may easily judge whose Children they are, who love to make a Lye, who speak Evil of, and slander their Neighbour, and whose Hearts are full of Pride, Subtlety, Malice, Envy, Revenge, and all Uncharitableness. — Surely they have *Satan* for their Father — For the Tempers of *Satan* they know; and the Works of *Satan* they do. But were they to see either themselves, or *Satan*, as he is, they could not but be terrified at their own Likeness, and abhor themselves in Dust and Ashes.

But

But to return. The Justice of God, in suffering us to be tempted, is vindicated from these Considerations—That we are here in a State of Disorder—That he has promised not to suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear,—And not only so, but to him that overcometh, he will give a Crown of Life.

The Holy Angels themselves, it should seem, were once put to a Trial whether they would be faithful or not. The first *Adam* was tempted, even in Paradise. And *JESUS CHRIST*, that second *Adam*, though he was a Son, yet was carried, as our Representative, by the Holy Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil. And there is not one single Saint in Paradise, amongst the Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, the glorious Company of the Apostles, the noble Army of Martyrs, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, who, when on Earth, was not assaulted by the fiery Darts of that wicked one, *the Devil*.

What then has been the common Lot of all God's Children, of the Angels, nay, of the Eternal Son of God himself, we must not think to be exempted from. No, 'tis sufficient if we are made perfect through Temptations, as they were.—And therefore, since we cannot but be tempted, unless we could unmake Human Nature, instead of repining at our Condition, we should rather be enquiring, at what Time of our Lives *Satan* most violently assaults us? And what those Devices are, which he commonly makes use of, in order to get an Advantage over us?

As to the first Question, I answer, we must expect to be tempted by him, in some Degree or other,

other, all our Lives long. — For this Life being a continual Warfare, we must never expect to have Rest from our Spiritual Adversary the Devil; or to say, our Combat with him is finished; till, with our blessed Master, we bow down our Heads, and give up the Ghost.

But since the Time of our Conversion, or first entering upon the Spiritual Life, is the most critical Time at which he, for the most Part, violently besets us, as well knowing, if he can prevent our setting out, he can lead us Captive at his Will; and since the wise Son of *Sirach* particularly warns us, when we are going to serve the LORD, to prepare our Souls for Temptation, I shall, in answer to the other Question, pass on to the

Second general Thing proposed; and point out, and withal give some Directions how to overcome those Devices, which Satan generally makes use of at our first Conversion, in order to get an Advantage over us.

But before I proceed to do this, let me observe to you, that whatsoever shall be delivered in the following Discourse is only designed for such as have actually entered upon the Divine Life; and not for Carnal Almost Christians, who have the Form of Godliness, but never yet felt the Power of it in their Hearts. This being premised;

The *first* Device I shall mention, which Satan makes use of, is, to drive us to Despair.

When God the Father awakens a Sinner by the Terrors of the Law, and by his Holy Spirit convinceth him of Sin, in order to lead him to CHRIST, and shew him the Necessity of a Redeemer;

deemer; then *Satan* generally strikes in, and aggravates those Convictions to such a Degree, as to make the Sinner doubt of finding Mercy thro' the Mediator.

Thus, in all his Temptations of the Holy *JESUS*, he chiefly aimed to make him question, whether he was the Son of GOD? *If thou be the Son of GOD*, says he, *do so and so*. With many such desponding Thoughts, no doubt, he filled the Heart of the great *St. Paul*, when he continued three Days, neither eating Bread or drinking Water; and therefore he speaks by Experience, when he says, in the Words of the Text, *We are not ignorant of his Devices*, how he will endeavour to drive the incestuous Person to Despair.

But let not any of you be influenced by him, to despair of finding Mercy. For it is not the Greatness or Number of our Crimes, but Impenitence and Unbelief, that will prove our Ruin: No, *were our Sins more in Number than the Hairs of our Head, or of a deeper Die than the brightest Scarlet; yet the Merits of the Death of JESUS CHRIST are infinitely greater, and Faith in his Blood shall make them white as Snow.*

Answer always, therefore, his despairing Suggestions, as your Blessed LORD did, with an *It is written*. Tell him, you know that your Redeemer liveth, ever to make Intercession for you; that the LORD hath received from him double for all your Crimes: And tho' you have sinned much, that is no Reason why you should despair, but only why you should love much, having so much forgiven.

A second Device that *Satan* generally makes use of, to get an Advantage over young Converts;

is, to tempt them to presume, and to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think.

When a Person has for some little Time tasted the good Word of Life, and felt the Powers of the World to come, he is commonly (as indeed well he may) most highly transported with that sudden Change he finds in himself. But then, *Satan* will not be wanting at such a Time, to puff him up with a high Conceit of his own Attainments, as if he was some great Person; and will tempt him to set at nought his Brethren, as though he was holier than they.

Take heed therefore, and let us beware of this Device of our spiritual Adversary; for as before Honour is Humility, so a haughty Spirit generally goes before a Fall; and GOD is obliged, when under such Circumstances, to send us some humbling Visitation, or permit us to fall, as he did *Peter*, into some grievous Sin, that we may learn not to be too high minded.

To check therefore all Suggestions to Spiritual Pride, let us consider, that we did not apprehend CHRIST, but were apprehended of him. — That we have nothing but what we have received. — That the free Grace of GOD has alone made the Difference between us and others; and, was GOD to leave us to the Deceitfulness of our own Hearts but one Moment, we should become weak and wicked, like other Men. — We should farther consider, that being proud of Grace, is the most ready Way to lose it. — For GOD resisteth the Proud, and giveth more Grace only to the Humble. And were we endowed with the Perfections of *Seraphims*; yet if we were proud of those Perfections, they would but render us more accomplished Devils. — Above all, we should pray earnestly

earnestly to Almighty GOD, that we may learn of JESUS CHRIST, to be lowly in Heart. That his Grace, through the Subtlety and Deceivableness of Satan, may not be our Poison. But that we may always think soberly of ourselves, as we ought to think.

A *third* Device I shall mention, which Satan generally makes use of to get an Advantage over us, is to tempt us to Uneasiness, and to have hard Thoughts of GOD, when we are under Deadness and Dryness in Prayer.

Though this is a Term not understood by the Natural Man; yet, whosoever there are amongst you, who have passed through the Pangs of the *New Birth*, they know full well what I mean, when I talk of Deadness and Dryness in Prayer. And, I doubt not, but many of you, amongst whom I am now preaching the Kingdom of GOD, are at this very Time labouring under it.

For, when Persons are first awakened to the Divine Life, because Grace is weak and Nature strong, GOD is often pleased to vouchsafe them some extraordinary Illuminations of his Holy Spirit; but when they are grown to be more perfect Men in CHRIST, then he frequently seems to leave them to themselves; and not only so, but permits a horrible Deadness and Dread to overwhelm them; at which Times Satan will not be wanting to vex and tempt them to Impatience, to the great Discomfort of their Souls.

But be not afraid; for this is no more than your Blessed Redeemer, that Spotless Lamb of GOD, has underwent before you: Witness his bitter Agony in the Garden, when his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.—When he sweat great Drops of Blood, falling on the
Ground;

Ground; when the Sense of the Divinity was withdrawn from him; and *Satan*, in all Probability, was permitted to set all his Terrors in Array before him.

Rejoice therefore, my Brethren, when you fall into the like Circumstances; as knowing, that you are therein Partakers of the Sufferings of *JESUS CHRIST*. — Consider, that it is necessary such inward Trials should come, to wean us off the immoderate Love of sensible Devotion, and to teach us to follow *CHRIST*, not merely for his Loves, but out of a Principle of Love and Obedience. — In Patience therefore possess your Souls, and be not terrified by *Satan's* Suggestions. — Still persevere in seeking *JESUS* in the Use of Means, though it be Sorrowing; and, though through Renumness and Barrenness of Soul, you may go mourning all the Day long. — Consider that the Spouse is with you, though behind the Curtain; as he was with *Mary*, at the Sepulchre, though she knew it not. — That he has withdrawn but for a little while, to make his next Visit more welcome. — That though he may now seem to frown and look back on you, as he did on the *Syrophonician Woman*; yet if you, like her, or blind *Bartimeus*, cry out so much the more earnestly, *JESUS, thou Son of David, have Mercy on us*; he will be made known unto you again, either in the Temple, by breaking of Bread, or some other Way.

But amongst all the Devices that *Satan* makes use of to get an Advantage over us, there is none in which he is more successful, or by which he grieves the Children of *GOD*, worse than that *Fourth Device* I am going to mention, viz. his troubling you with blasphemous, profane, im-

pious,

pious, unbelieving Thoughts; and sometimes to such a Degree, that they are as tormenting as the Rack.

Some indeed are apt to impute all such evil Thoughts to a Disorder of Body. — But those who know any Thing of the Spiritual Life, can inform you with greater Certainty, that for the Generality, they proceed from that wicked One, the Devil; who, no doubt, has Power given him from Above, as well now as formerly, to disorder the Body, as he did *Job's*; that he may, with the more Secrecy and Success, work upon, ruffle and torment the Soul.

You that have felt his fiery Darts, can subscribe to the Truth of this, and by fatal Experience can tell, how often he has bid you, *Curse GOD and die*, and darted into your Thoughts a Thousand blasphemous Suggestions, even in your most secret and solemn Retirements; the bare looking back on which makes your very Hearts to tremble.

I appeal to your own Consciences; Have not some of you, when you have been lifting up Holy Hands in Prayer, been pestered with such a Croud of the most horrid Insinuations, that you have been often tempted to rise off from your Knees, and been made believe your Prayers were an Abomination to the LORD? Nay, when, with the rest of your Christian Brethren, you have crouded round the Holy Table, and taken the sacred Symbols of CHRIST'S most blessed Body and Blood into your Hands, instead of remembering the Death of your Saviour, have you not been employed in driving out evil Thoughts, as *Abraham* was in driving away the Birds, that came to devour his Sacrifice; and thereby been terrified,

left

lest you have eat and drank your own Damnation?

But marvel not, as though some strange Thing happened unto you; for this has been the common Lot of all God's Children. — We read, even in *Job's Time*, *That when the Sons of GOD came to appear before their Maker, i. e. at public Worship, Satan also came amongst them, to disturb their Devotions.*

And think not that God is angry with you for these distracting, tho' ever so blasphemous Thoughts: No, he knows it is not you, but *Satan* working in you; and therefore, notwithstanding he may be displeased with, and certainly will punish him; yet he will both pity and reward you. And though it be difficult to make Persons in your Circumstances to believe so; yet, I doubt not, but you are more acceptable to God, when performing your holy Duties in the midst of such involuntary Distractions, than when you are wrapped up by sensible Devotion, as it were, into the third Heavens. — For you are then suffering, as well as doing the Will of God at the same Time; and, like *Nehemiah's* Servants at the Building of the Temple, are holding a Trowel in the one Hand, and a Sword in the other. — But be not you driven from the Use of any Ordinance whatever, on account of those abominable Suggestions; for then you let *Satan* get his desired Advantage over you; it being his chief Design, by these Thoughts, to make you fall out with the Means of Grace; and to tempt you to believe, you do not please God, for no other Reason, than because you do not please yourselves. — Rather persevere in the Use of the Holy Communion especially, and all other Means whatever; and

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and when these Temptations have wrought that Resignation in you, for which they were permitted, GOD will visit you with fresh Tokens of his Love, as he met *Abraham*, when he returned from the Slaughter of the five Kings; and will send an Angel from Heaven, as he did to his Son, on purpose to strengthen you.

Hitherto we have only observed such Devices: as *Satan* makes use of immediately by himself; but there is a

Fifth I shall mention, that is not the least, *viz.* Tempting us by our carnal Friends and Relations.

This is one of the most common, as well as most artful Devices he makes use of, to draw young Converts from GOD; for when he cannot prevail over them by himself, he will try what he can do by the Influence and Mediation of others.

Thus he tempted *Eve*, that she might tempt *Adam*.—Thus he stirred up *Job's* Wife, to bid him *Curse GOD and die*.—And thus he made use of *Peter's* Tongue, to persuade our Blessed LORD *To spare himself*, and thereby decline those Sufferings, by which alone we could be preserved from suffering the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. And thus, in these last Days, he often stirs up our most powerful Friends and dearest Intimates, to dissuade us from going in that narrow Way, which alone leadeth unto Life eternal.

But our Blessed LORD has furnished us with a sufficient Answer to all such Suggestions.—*Get you behind me, my Adversaries*; for otherwise they will be an Offence unto you; and the only Reason why they give such Advice is, because

they savour not the Things that be of God, but the Things that be of Men.

Whoever, therefore, among you are resolved to serve the LORD, prepare your Souls for many such Temptations as these; for it is necessary that such Offences should come, to try your Sincerity, to teach us to cease from Man, and to see if we will forsake all to follow CHRIST.

Indeed our Modernisers of Christianity would persuade us, that the Gospel was calculated only for about two hundred Years; and that now there is no need of hating Father and Mother, or being persecuted for the Sake of CHRIST and his Gospel.

But such Persons err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the Power of Godliness in their Hearts; for whosoever receives the Love of God in the Truth of it, will find, that CHRIST came to send not Peace, but a Sword upon Earth, as much now as ever.—That the Father-in-law shall be against the Daughter-in-law, in these latter, as well as in the primitive Times; and that if we will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, we must, as then, so now, from carnal Friends and Relations, suffer Persecution.

But the Devil has another Device, as dangerous as any of the former,—i. e. by not tempting us at all, or rather by withdrawing himself for a while, in order to come upon us at an Hour when we think not of it.

Thus it is said, that he left JESUS CHRIST only for a Season; and our Blessed LORD has bid us to watch and pray always, that we enter not into Temptation; thereby implying, that Satan, whether we think of it or not, is always seeking how he may devour us.

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If we would therefore behave like good Soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, we must be always upon our Guard, and never pretend to lay down our spiritual Weapons of Prayer and Watching, till our Warfare is accomplished by Death; for if we do, our spiritual *Amalek* will quickly prevail against us. What if he has left us? it is only for a Season; yet, a little while, and, like a roaring Lion, with double Fury, he will break out upon us again.—So great a Coward as the Devil is, he seldom leaves us at the first Onset. — As he followed our Blessed LORD with one Temptation after another, so will he treat his Servants. — And the Reason why he does not renew his Attacks, is sometimes, because GOD knows we are yet weak and unable to bear them, — sometimes, because our grand Adversary thinks to beset us at a more convenient Season.

Watch carefully therefore over thy Heart, O Christian; and whenever thou perceivest thyself to be falling into a spiritual Slumber, say to it, as CHRIST to his Disciples, *Arise my Soul, why sleepest thou?* Awake, awake; put on Strength, watch and pray, or otherwise the *Philistines* will be upon thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. Alas! Is this Life a Time to lay down and slumber in? Arise, and call upon thy GOD; thy spiritual Enemy is not dead, but lurketh in some secret Place, seeking a convenient Opportunity how he may betray thee. If thou ceaseest to strive with him, thou ceaseest to be a Friend of GOD; thou ceaseest to go in that narrow Way which leadeth unto Life.

Thus have I endeavoured to point out to you some of those Devices, that Satan generally makes use

use of to get an Advantage over us; many others there are, no doubt, which he often makes use of.

But these, on account of my Youth and Want of Experience, I cannot yet apprise you of; they who have been listed for many Years in their Master's Service, and fought under his Banner against our spiritual *Amalek*, are able to discover more of his Artifices; and, being tempted in all Things, like unto their Brethren, can, in all Things, advise and succour those that are tempted.

In the mean while, let me exhort my young Fellow-Soldiers, who, like myself, are but just entering the Field, and for whose Sake this was written, not to be discouraged at the fiery Trial wherewith they must be tried, if they would be found faithful Servants of JESUS CHRIST. You see, my dearly beloved Brethren, by what has been delivered, that our Way through the Wilderness of this World to the Heavenly *Canaan*, is beset with Thorns, and that there are the Sons of *Anak* to be grappled with, e'er you can possess the promised Land. But let not these, like so many false Spies, discourage you from going up to fight the LORD's Battles, but say with *Caleb* and *Joshua*, *Nay, but we will go up, for we are able to conquer them.* JESUS CHRIST, that Captain of our Salvation, has in our stead, and as our Representative, baffled the grand Enemy of Mankind, and we have nothing to do, but manfully to fight under his Banner, and to go on from conquering to conquer. Our Glory does not consist in being exempted from, but in enduring Temptations. *Blessed is the Man*, says the Apostle, *that endureth Temptation*; and again, Brethren,

Brethren, count it all Joy, when you fall into divers Temptations: And in that perfect Form our blessed LORD has prescribed to us, we are taught to pray, not so much to be delivered from all Temptation, as from the Evil of it. No; whilst we are on this Side Eternity, it must needs be that Temptations come; and, no doubt, Satan has desired to have all of us, to sift us as Wheat. But wherefore should we fear? For he that is for us, is by far more powerful, than all that are against us. JESUS CHRIST, our great High Priest, is exalted to the Right Hand of GOD, and there sitteth to make Intercession for us, that our Faith fail not.

Since then CHRIST is praying, whom should we fear? And since he has promised to make us more than Conquerors, of whom should we be afraid? No, though an Host of Devils are set in Array against us, let us not be afraid; and tho' there should rise up the hottest Persecution against us, yet let us put our Trust in GOD. — What though *Satan*, and the rest of his apostate Spirits, are powerful, when compared with us; yet, if put in Competition with the Almighty, they are as weak as the meanest Worms. GOD has them all reserved in Chains of Darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day. — So far as he permits them, they shall go, but no farther; and where he pleases, there shall their proud malicious Designs be stayed. We read in the Gospel, that *though a Legion of them possessed one Man, yet they could not destroy him; nor could they so much as enter into a Swine, without first having Leave given them from Above.* It is true, we often find they foil us, when we are assaulted by them; but let us be strong, and very courageous; for,

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though they bruise our Heels, we shall, at length, bruise their Heads. — Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come; and then we shall see all our spiritual Enemies put under our Feet. — What if they do come out against us, like so many great *Goliaths*; yet, if we can go forth, as the Stripling *David*, in the Name and Strength of the LORD of Hosts, we may say, *Oh Satan, where is thy Power? Oh fallen Spirits, where is your Victory?*

Once more therefore, and to conclude; let us be strong, and very couragious, and let us put on the whole Armour of GOD, that we may be able to stand against the fiery Darts of the wicked One. Let us renounce ourselves, and the World, and then we shall take away the Armour in which he trusteth, and he will find nothing in us for his Temptations to work upon. We shall then prevent his malicious Designs; and being willing to suffer ourselves, shall need less Sufferings to be sent us from Above. *Let us have our Loins girt about with Truth; and for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation; praying always with all manner of Supplication. Above all Things, Let us take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD, and the Shield of Faith, looking always to JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Pain, despising the Shame, and is now sat down at the Right Hand of GOD.*

To which happy Place, may GOD of his infinite Mercy translate us all, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

To whom with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, Three Persons and One Eternal GOD, be all Honour, and Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

S E R.

S E R M O N XV.

The KNOWLEDGE of JESUS CHRIST the best KNOW- LEDGE.

I COR. ii. 2.
*I determined not to know any Thing among
you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him
crucified.*

THE Persons to whom these Words were written, were the Members of the Church of Corinth; who, as appears by the foregoing Chapter, were not only divided into different Sects, by one saying, *I am of Paul*, and another, *I am of Apollos*; but also had many amongst them, who were so full of the Wisdom of this World, and so wise in their own Eyes, that they set at nought the Simplicity of the Gospel, and accounted the Apostle's Preaching Foolishness.

Never had the Apostle more Need of the Wisdom of the Serpent, mingled with the Innocency of the Dove, than now. What is the Sum of all his Wisdom? he tells them, in the Words of the Text, *I determined not to know any Thing*

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amongst you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.

A Resolution this, worthy the great St. Paul, and no less worthy, no less necessary for every Minister, and every Disciple of CHRIST, to make always, even unto the End of the World.

In the following Discourse, I shall,

First, explain what is meant by *not knowing any Thing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.*

Secondly, Give some Reasons why every Christian should determine not to know any Thing else. And

Thirdly, Conclude with a general Exhortation to put this Determination into Practice.

And *First*, I am to explain what is meant by *not knowing any Thing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.*

By JESUS CHRIST, we are to understand the *Eternal Son of GOD*. He is called *JESUS*, *i. e.* A Saviour, because he was to save us from the Guilt and Power of our Sins; and, like *Joshua*, by whom he was remarkably typified, to lead GOD's Spiritual *Israel* through the Wilderness of this World, to the heavenly *Canaan*, the promised Inheritance of the Children of GOD.

He is called CHRIST, which signifies *Anointed*, because he was anointed by the Holy Ghost at his Baptism, to be a Prophet to instruct, a Priest to make an Attonement for, and a King to govern and protect his Church. — And he was crucified, or hung (O stupendous Love!) till he was dead upon the Cross, that he might become a
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Curse

Curse for us: For it is written, *Cursed is every Man that hangeth upon a Tree.*

The Foundation or first Cause of his Suffering, was our Fall in *Adam*, in whom, as the living Oracles of GOD declare, *We all died, i. e.* His Sin was imputed to us all. It pleased GOD, after he had spoken the World into Being, to create Man after his own Divine Image, to breathe into him the Breath of Life, and to place him as our Representative in the Garden of *Eden*.

But he being left to his own free Will, eat of the forbidden Fruit, notwithstanding GOD had told him, *the Day in which he eat thereof, he should surely die*; and thereby he, with his whole Posterity, in whose Name he acted, became liable to the Wrath of GOD, and sunk into a spiritual Death.

But behold the Goodness, as well as the Severity of GOD! For no sooner had Man been convicted as a Sinner, but lo! a Saviour is revealed to him, under the Character of the Seed of the Woman, the Merits of whose Sacrifice was then immediately to take Place, and who should, in the Fulness of Time, by suffering Death, satisfy for the Guilt we had contracted; by obeying the whole moral Law, work out for us an everlasting Righteousness; and by becoming a Principle of new Life in us, destroy the Power of the Devil, and thereby restore us to a better State than that in which we were at first created.

This is the plain Scriptural Account of that Mystery of Godliness GOD manifested in the Flesh; and to this our own Hearts, unless blinded by the God of this World, cannot but yield an immediate Assent.

For, let us but search our own Hearts, and ask ourselves if we could create our own Children, whether or not we would not create them with a less Mixture of Good and Evil than we find in ourselves? Supposing GOD then only to have our Goodness, he could not, at first, make us so sinful, so polluted as we are. But supposing him to be as he is, infinitely good, or Goodness itself, then it is absolutely impossible that he should create any thing but what is like himself, perfect, entire, lacking nothing. — Man then could not come out of the Hands of his Maker, so miserably blind and naked, with such a Mixture of the Beast and Devil, as he finds now in himself, but must have fallen from what he was; and as it does not suit with the Goodness and Justness of GOD, to punish the whole Race of Mankind with these Disorders merely for nothing; and since Men bring these Disorders into the World with them; it follows, that as they could not sin themselves, being yet unborn, some other Man's Sin must have been imputed to them; from whence, as from a Fountain, all these Evils flow.

I know this Doctrine of our original Sin, or Fall in *Adam*, is esteemed Foolishness by the wise Disputer of this World, who will reply, *How does it suit with the Goodness of GOD to impute one Man's Sin to an innocent Posterity?* But has it not been proved to a Demonstration, that it is so? And therefore, supposing we cannot reconcile it to our shallow Comprehensions, that is no Argument at all: For if it appears that GOD has done a Thing, we may be sure it is right, whether we can see the Reasons for it or not.

But this is entirely cleared up by what was said before, that no sooner was the Sin imputed, but

but a CHRIST was revealed; and this CHRIST, this GOD incarnate, who was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, that he might be freed from the Guilt of our original Sin; who was born of the Virgin Mary, that he might be the Seed of the Woman only; who suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, a *Gentile* Governor, to fulfil those Prophecies, which signified what Death he should die — This same JESUS, who was crucified in Weakness, but raised in Power, is that Divine Person, that *Immanuel*, that GOD with us, whom we preach, in whom you believe, and whom alone the Apostle, in the Text, was determined to know.

By which Word *Know*, we are not to understand a bare historical Knowledge (for to know that CHRIST was crucified by his Enemies at *Jerusalem* in this Manner only, will do us no more Service than to know that *Cæsar* was inhumanly butchered by his Friends at *Rome*) but the Word *Know*, means to know, so as to approve of him; as when CHRIST says, *Verily, I know you not*; i. e. *I know you not, so as to approve of you* — It signifies to know him, so as to embrace him in all his Offices; — to take him to be our Prophet, Priest, and King; so as to give up ourselves wholly to be instructed, saved, and governed by him — It implies an experimental Knowledge of his Crucifixion, so as to feel the Power of it, and to be crucified unto the World, as the Apostle explains himself in the Epistle to the *Philippians*, where he says, *He counts all Things but Dung and Dross, that he might know him, and the Power of his Resurrection.*

This Knowledge the Apostle was so swallowed up in, that he was determined not to know any Thing else; that is, He was resolved to make

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that his only Study—the governing Principle of his Life, the Point and End in which all his Thoughts, Words, and Actions, should center.

Secondly, I pass on to give some Reasons why every Christian should, with the Apostle, determine *not to know any Thing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.*

And, *First*, Without this, our Persons will not be accepted in the Sight of GOD. This, and consequently this only, is Life Eternal, says our blessed LORD himself, *to know thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent.* As also St. Peter says, *There is now no other Name given under Heaven, whereby we can be saved, but that of JESUS CHRIST.*

Some, indeed, may please themselves in knowing the World, others boast themselves in the Knowledge of a Multitude of Languages; but could we speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, or did we know the Number of the Stars, and could call them all by their Names, yet, without this experimental Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, *and him crucified*, it would profit us nothing.

The former, indeed, may procure us a little Honour, which cometh of Man; but the latter only can render us acceptable in the Sight of GOD: For if we are ignorant of CHRIST, GOD will be to us a consuming Fire.

CHRIST is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh to the Father but through him—He is the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, and none ever were, or ever will be received

ceived up into Glory, but by an experimental Application of his Merits to their Hearts.

We might as well think to rebuild the Tower of *Babel*, or reach Heaven with our Hands, as to imagine we could enter therein by any other Door, than that of *the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST*.

Other Knowledge may make you wise in your own Eyes, and puff you up; but this alone edifieth, and maketh wise unto Salvation.

As the meanest Christian, if he knows but this, though he know nothing else, will be accepted; so the greatest Master in *Israel*, the most Letter-learned Teacher, without this, will be rejected. His Philosophy is mere Nonsense, his Wisdom mere Foolishness in the Sight of GOD.

The Author of the Words now before us, was a remarkable Instance of this; never, perhaps, was a greater Scholar, in all what the World calls fine Learning, than he: For he was bred up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, and profited in the Knowledge of Books, as well as in the *Jewish* Religion, above many of his Equals, as appears by the Language, Rhetorick, and Spirit of his Writings; and yet, when he came to know what it was to be a Christian, *He accounted all Things but Loss, so he might win CHRIST*. And, tho' he was now at *Corinth*, that Seat of polite Learning, yet he was absolutely determined not to know any Thing, to make nothing his Study, but what taught him to know *JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified*.

Hence then, appears the Folly of those who spend their whole Lives in heaping up other Knowledge; and, instead of searching the Scriptures, which testify of *JESUS CHRIST*, and are

alone able to make them wise unto Salvation, disquiet themselves in a Pursuit after the Knowledge of such Things, as when known, concern them no more, than to know that a Bird dropped a Feather upon one of the *Pyrenean Mountains*.

Hence it is, that so many, who profess themselves wise, because they can dispute of the Causes and Effects, the moral Fitness and Unfitness of Things, appear mere Fools in the Things of GOD; so that when you come to converse with them about the great Work of Redemption wrought out for us by JESUS CHRIST, of his being a Propitiation for our Sins, a Fulfiller of the Covenant of Works, and a Principle of new Life to our Souls, they are quite ignorant of the whole Matter; and prove, to a Demonstration, that, with all their Learning, they know nothing yet, as they ought to know.

But, alas! how must it surprize a Man, when the Most High is about to take away his Soul, to think that he has passed for a wise Man, and a learned Disputer in this World, and yet is left destitute of that Knowledge which alone can make him appear with Boldness before the Judgment-Seat of JESUS CHRIST? How must it grieve him, in a future State, to see others, whom he despised as unlearned and illiterate Men, because they experimentally knew CHRIST, and him crucified, exalted to the Right Hand of GOD, and himself, with all his fine Accomplishments, because he knew every Thing, perhaps, but CHRIST, thrust down into Hell?

Well might the Apostle, in a holy Triumph, cry out, *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World?* For, GOD will then make foolish the Wisdom of this World,

and bring to nought the Wisdom of those who were so knowing in their own Eyes.

I made this Digression from the main Point before us, not to condemn or deny human Literature, but to shew, that it ought to be used only in Subordination to divine; and that a Christian, if the Holy Spirit guided the Pen of the Apostle, when he wrote this Epistle, ought to study no Books, but such as lead him into a farther Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.

And there is the more Reason for this, because of the great Mischief the contrary Practice has done to the Church of GOD: For, what was it but this Learning, or rather this Ignorance, that kept so many of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* from the saving Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST? And what is it, but this human Wisdom, this Science, falsely so called, that blinds the Understanding, and corrupts the Hearts of so many modern Unbelievers, and makes them unwilling to submit to the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith in CHRIST JESUS?

But, *Secondly*, Without this Knowledge our Performances, as well as Persons, will not be acceptable in the Sight of GOD.

Through Faith, says the Apostle, that is, thro' a lively Faith in a Mediator hereafter to come, *Abel offered a more acceptable Sacrifice than Cain*. And it is through a like Faith, or an experimental Knowledge of the same divine Mediator, that our Sacrifices of Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgivings, come up as an Incense before the Throne of Grace.

Two Persons may go up to the Temple to pray; but he only will return home justified, who, in the Language of our Collects, sincerely

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offers up his Prayers through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

For it is this great Atonement, this all-sufficient Sacrifice, which alone can give us Boldness to approach with our Prayers to the Holy of Holies; and he that presumes to go without this, acts *Korab's* Crime over again—offers GOD strange Fire, and, consequently, will be rejected by him.

Farther, as our Devotions to GOD will not, so neither, without this Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, will our Acts of Charity to Men be accepted by him.

For did we give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and yet were destitute of this Knowledge, it would profit us nothing.

This our Blessed LORD himself intimates in the 25th of St. *Matthew*, where he tells those that had been rich in good Works, *That inasmuch as they did it unto one of the least of his Brethren, they did it unto him.* From whence we may plainly infer, that it is seeing CHRIST in his Members, and doing Good to them out of an experimental Knowledge of his Love to us, that alone will render our Alms-Deeds rewardable at the last Day.

Lastly, As neither our Acts of Piety nor Charity, so neither will our civil nor moral Actions be acceptable to GOD without this experimental Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.

Our modern Pretenders to Reason, indeed, set up another Principle to act from; they talk, I know not what, “Of doing moral and civil Duties of Life, from the moral Fitness and Unfitness of Things.” But such Men are blind, however they may pretend to see; and going thus about to establish their own Righteousness, are utterly

utterly ignorant of the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith in CHRIST JESUS.

For though we grant, that Morality is a substantial Part of Christianity, and that CHRIST came not to destroy, *i. e.* not to take off the moral Law, as a Rule of Action, but to explain, and so fulfil it; yet we affirm, that our moral and civil Actions are now no farther acceptable in the Sight of GOD the Father, than as they proceed from a Principle of a new Nature, and an experimental Knowledge of, or vital Faith in his dear Son.

For the Death of JESUS CHRIST has turned our whole Lives into one continued Sacrifice; and whether we eat or drink, whether we pray to GOD, or do any Thing to Man, it must all be done out of a Love for, and Knowledge of Him who died and rose again, to render all, even our most ordinary Deeds, acceptable in the Sight of GOD.

If we live by this Principle, if CHRIST be the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all our Actions, then our most indifferent ones are acceptable Sacrifices; but if this Principle be wanting, our most pompous Services avail nothing. We are but spiritual Idolaters—we sacrifice to our own Net—we make an Idol of ourselves, by making ourselves, and not CHRIST, the End of our Actions; and therefore such Actions are so far from being accepted by GOD, that, according to the Language of one of the Articles of our Church, *We doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin, because they spring not from an experimental Faith in, and Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.*

Were we not fallen Creatures, we might then act, perhaps, from other Principles; but since
we

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we are fallen out of GOD in *Adam*, and are restored again only by the Obedience and Death of JESUS CHRIST, the Face of Things is entirely changed, and all we think, speak, or do, is only accepted in, and through him.

Justly, therefore, may I, in the

Third and last Place, exhort you, to put the Apostle's Resolution in Practice, and beseech you with him to determine, *Not to know any Thing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.*

I say, *determine*; for unless you sit down first, and count the Cost, and from a well-grounded Conviction of the Excellency of this, above all other Knowledge whatsoever, resolve to make this your chief Study, your only End, your One Thing needful, every frivolous Temptation will draw you aside from the Pursuit after it.

Your Friends and carnal Acquaintance, and, above all, your grand Adversary the Devil, will be persuading you to determine not to know any Thing, but how to lay up Goods for many Years, — to get a Knowledge and Taste of the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World; — But do you determine not to follow, or be led them — and the more they persuade you to know other Things, the more do you determine not to know any Thing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified. — For, *this Knowledge never faileth*; But whether they be Riches, they shall fail — Whether they be Poms, they shall cease — Whether they be Vanities, they shall fade away — But the Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified, abideth for ever.

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Whatever, therefore, you are ignorant of, be not ignorant of this— if you *know* CHRIST, and *him crucified*, you know enough to make you happy, supposing you know nothing else; and, without this, all your other Knowledge cannot keep you from being everlastingly miserable.

Value not then the Contempt of Friends, which you must necessarily meet with upon your open Profession to act according to this Determination. For your Master, whose you are, was despised before you; and all that will know nothing else but JESUS CHRIST, and *him crucified*, must, in some Degree or other, suffer Persecution.

It is necessary that Offences should come, to try what is in our Hearts, and whether we will be faithful Soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, or not.

Dare we then to confess our Blessed Master before Men, and to shine as Lights in the World, amidst a crooked and perverse Generation? Let us not be content with following him afar off; for then we shall, as *Peter* did, soon deny him; but let us be altogether Christians, and let our Speech, and all our Actions, betray to the World whose Disciples we are, and that we have indeed determined *not to know any Thing, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified*. O then! well will it be with us, and happy, unspeakably happy shall we be, even here,—and what is infinitely better, when others that despised us, shall be calling for the Mountains to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them, we shall be exalted to sit down on the Right Hand of GOD, and shine as the Sun in the Firmament in the Kingdom of our most adorable Redeemer, for ever and ever.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

SERMON XVI.

The heinous SIN of *Drunkenness*.

EPHESIANS V. 6.

Be not drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

THE Persons to whom these Words were written, were the People of *Ephesus*, who being, as we are told in the *Acts*, Worshippers of the great Goddess *Diana*, in all Probability, worshipped the God *Bacchus* also; at the Celebration of whose Festivals, it was always customary, nay, part of their Religion, to get drunk; as though there was no other Way to please their God, but by turning themselves into Brutes.

The Apostle therefore, in this Chapter, amongst many other Precepts, more especially applicable to them, lays down that in the Text; and exhorts them, as they had now, by the free Grace of GOD, been turned from heathenish Darkness, to the Light of the Gospel, to walk as Children of Light, and no longer make it Part of their Religion or Practice to be drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess; but, on the contrary, strive to be filled with the Spirit of that Saviour,
after

after whose Name they were now called, and whose Religion taught them to abstain from such a filthy Sin, and to live soberly, as they ought to live.

The World being now Christian, and the Doctrines of the Gospel every where received, one would imagine, there should be no Reason for repeating the Precepts now before us. But alas, Christians! I mean Christians falsely so called, are so led Captive by all Sin in general, and by this of Drunkenness in particular, that was *St. Paul* to rise again from the Dead, he might be tempted to think most of us were turned back to the Worship of dumb Idols; that we had set up Temples in Honour of *Bacchus*, and made it Part of our Religion, as the *Ephesians* did of theirs, *to be drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess.*

Our civil Magistrates have not been wanting to use the Power given them from above, for the Punishment and Restraint of such evil Doings; and I wish it could be said this Plague of Drinking, by what they have done, had been stayed amongst us. But alas! though their Labour, we trust, has not been altogether in vain in the LORD, yet Thousands, and I could almost say, ten Thousands fall daily at our Right Hand, by this Sin of Drunkenness, in our Streets; nay, Men seem to have made a Covenant with Hell, and though the Power of the civil Magistrate is exerted against them; nay, and though they cannot but daily see the Companions of their Riot hourly, by this Sin, brought to the Grave, yet they will rise up early to follow strong Drink, and cry, *To Morrow shall be as to Day, and so much the more abundantly; when we awake, we will seek it yet again.*

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It is high Time therefore, for thy Ministers, O GOD, to lift up their Voices like a Trumpet; and since human Threats cannot prevail, to set before them the Terrors of the LORD, and try if these will not persuade them to cease from the Evil of their Doings.

But alas! how shall I address myself to them? I fear Excess of Drinking has made them such mere *Nabals*, that there is no speaking to them. And many of GOD's Servants have toiled all their Life-times in dissuading them from this Sin of Drunkenness, yet they will not forbear. However, at thy Command, I will speak also, tho' they be a rebellious House. Magnify thy Strength, O LORD, in my Weakness, and grant that I may speak with such Demonstration of the Spirit, and with Power, that from henceforward they may cease to act so unwisely, and this Sin of Drunkenness may not be their Ruin.

Believe me, ye unhappy Men of *Belial*, (for such, alas! this Sin has made you) it is not without the strongest Reasons, as well as utmost Concern for your precious and immortal Souls, that I now conjure you, in the Apostle's Words, *Not to be drunk with Wine, or any other Liquor, wherein is Excess.*

For, *First*, Drunkenness is a Sin which must be highly displeasing to GOD; because it is an Abuse of his good Creatures.

When GOD first made Man, and had breathed into him the Breath of Life, he gave him Dominion over the Works of his Hands, and every Herb bearing Seed, and every Tree, in which was the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed, to him it was given for Meat; but when *Adam* had tasted the forbidden Fruit, which was the only Restraint
laid

laid upon him, he forfeited this Privilege, and had no Right, since he had disobeyed his Creator, to the Use of any one of the Creatures.

But, blessed be GOD, this Charter, as well as all other Privileges, is restored to us by the Death of the second *Adam*, our LORD and Master JESUS CHRIST. Of every Beast of the Field, every Fish of the Sea, and whatsoever flieth in the Air, or moveth on the Face of the Earth, that is fit for Food, we may freely eat, *i. e.* without Scruple take, and eat; but then, with this Limitation, that we use them moderately. For GOD, by the Death of JESUS, has given no Man License to be intemperate; but, on the contrary, has laid us under the strongest Obligations to live soberly, as well as godly in this present World.

But the Drunkard, despising the Goodness and Bounty of GOD, in restoring to us what we had so justly forfeited, turns his Grace into Wantonness; and as though the Creature was not of itself enough subject to Vanity, by being cursed for our Sake, he abuses it still more, by making it administer to his Lusts; and turns that Wine which was intended to make glad his Heart, into a deadly Poison.

But thinkest thou, O Drunkard, whosoever thou art, thou shalt escape the righteous Judgment of GOD? No, the Time will shortly come that thou must be no longer Steward, and then the Sovereign Lord of all the Earth will reckon with thee for thus wasting his Goods. Alas! wilt thou then wrest Scripture any longer to thy own Damnation? And because JESUS CHRIST turned Water into Wine at the Marriage Feast, to supply the Wants of his indigent Host, say, that it is therefore meet to make merry, and be drunken.

en. No, thou shalt be silent before him; and know, that tho' thou hast encouraged thyself in Drunkenness by such like Arguments, yet for all these Things God will bring thee into Judgment.

But, *Secondly*, What makes Drunkenness more exceeding sinful, is, that a Man, by falling into it, sinneth against his own Body.

When the Apostle would dissuade the *Corinthians* from Fornication, he urges this as an Argument, *Flee Fornication*, says he, *Brethren; for he that committeth Fornication, sinneth against his own Body.* And may not I as justly cry out, *Flee Drunkenness*, my Brethren, since he that committeth that Crime, sinneth against his own Body? For, from whence come so many Diseases and Distempers in your Bodies? Come they not from hence, even from your Intemperance in Drinking? Who hath Pains in the Head? Who hath Rottenness in the Bones? Who hath Redness of Eyes? He that tarries long at the Wine, he that rises early to seek new Wine. How many walking Skeletons have you seen, whose Bodies were once exceeding fair to look upon, fat and well favoured; but, by this Sin of Drinking, how has their Beauty departed from them, and how have they been permitted to walk to and fro upon the Earth, as though God intended to set them up, as he did *Lot's Wife*, for Monuments of his Justice, that others might learn not to get drunk? Nay, I appeal to yourselves. Are not many, for this Cause, even now sickly among you? And have not many of your Companions, whom you once saw so flourishing, like green Bay Trees, been brought by it, with Sorrow, to their Graves?

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We might, perhaps, think ourselves hardly dealt with by God, was he to send us, as he did to the Royal Psalmist, to choose one Plague out of three, whereby we should be destroyed. But had the Almighty decreed to cut off Man from the Face of the Earth, and to shorten his Days, he could not well send a more effectual Plague, than to permit Men, as they pleased, to overcharge themselves with Drunkenness; for tho' it be a slow, yet it is a certain Poison. And if the Sword has slain its Thousands, Drunkenness has slain its ten Thousands.

And will not this alarm you, O ye Transgressors? Will not this persuade you to spare yourselves, and to do your Bodies no Harm? What, have you lost the first Principles of human Nature, the fundamental Law of Self-preservation? You seem to have a great Fondness for your Bodies, why otherwise, to gratify their inordinate Appetites, do you drink to Excess? But surely, if you truly loved them, you would not thus destroy them; and was there no other Argument to be urged against Drunkenness, the Consideration that it will destroy those Lives you are so fond of, one would imagine, should be sufficient.

I know, indeed, that it is a common Answer, that Drunkards make to those, who, out of Love, would pull them as Firebrands out of the Fire, *We are no Body's Enemy but our own.* But this, instead of being an Excuse for, is but an Aggravation of their Guilt: For (not to mention that the Drunkenness of one Man has cloathed many a Family with Rags, and that it is scarce possible for a Person to be drunk, without tempting his Neighbour also) I say, not to mention these, and many other ill Consequences, which would prove
such

such an Excuse to be entirely false; yet what is dearer to a Man than himself? And if he himself be lost, what would all the whole World avail him? But how wilt thou stand, O Man, before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, and make such an Excuse, when thou shalt be arraigned before him as a Self-Murderer? Will it then be sufficient, thinkest thou, to say, *I was no Man's Enemy but my own?* No; GOD will then tell thee, that thou wast bought with the Price of his dear Son's Blood, and thou oughtest therefore to have glorified him with thy Spirit, and with thy Body, which were his. And since thou hast, by Intemperance, destroyed thy Body, he will destroy both thy Body and Soul in Hell.

But, *Thirdly*, What renders Drunkenness more inexcusable, is, that it robs a Man of his Reason.

Reason is the Glory of a Man; the chief Thing whereby GOD has made us to differ from the Brute Creation. And our modern Unbelievers have exalted it to such a high Degree, as even to set it in Opposition to Revelation, and deny the LORD that bought them. But though in doing this, they greatly err, and whilst they profess themselves wise, become real Fools; yet we must acknowledge, that Reason is the Candle of the LORD, and whosoever puts it out, shall bear his Punishment, whosoever he be.

But yet, this the Drunkard does. *Nebuchadnezzar's* Curse he makes his Choice, his Reason departeth from him; and then what is he better than a Brute?

The very Heathen Kings were so sensible of this, that, in order to deter their young Princes from drinking, they used to make their Sons get drunk, and be exposed before them. And wilt thou

thou but see thine own Picture, O Drunkard, when, after having drowned thy Reason, thou staggerest to and fro, like one of the Fools in *Israel*, and seest thy very Companions making Songs upon thee, surely thou wouldst not return to thy Vomit again, but abhor thyself in Dust and Ashes!

When *David*, in a holy Ecstasy, was dancing before the Ark, *Michal*, *Saul's* Daughter, despised him in her Heart; and when he came home, she said, *How glorious was the King of Israel to Day, who uncovered himself to Day in the Eyes of the Handmaids of his Servants, as one of the vain Fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself.* And may not every one that meets a Drunkard, more justly say, *How glorious does he, that was made a little lower than the Angels, look to Day, when unmindful of his Dignity, he has, by drinking, robbed himself of his Reason, and reduced himself to a Level with the Beasts that perish.*

But what if *God*, in the Midst of one of these drunken Fits, should arrest thee by Death, and say unto thee, *Thou Fool, this Moment shall thy Soul be required of thee.* Oh! How wouldst thou appear in those filthy Garments before that *God*, in whose Sight the Heavens are not clean. And how knowest thou, O Man, but this may be thy Lot? Hast thou not known many, in thy Lifetime, summoned at such an unguarded Hour? and what Assurance hast thou given thee, that thou shalt not be the next? Because *God* has forborn thee so long, thinkest thou he will forbear always? No, this is rather a Sign that he will come at an Hour thou lookest not for him; and since his Goodness and Long-Suffering has not led thee to Repentance, he will cut thee down,

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down, and not permit thee to cumber the Ground any longer. Consider this then, all ye that count it a Pleasure to turn yourselves into Brutes, lest God pluck you away by a sudden Death, and there be none to deliver you.

But, *Fourthly*, There is a farther Aggravation of this Crime, that it is an Inlet to, and Fore-runner of many other Sins; for it seldom comes alone.

We may say of Drunkenness, as *Solomon* does of Strife, that it is like the letting out of Water; for we know not what will be the End thereof. Its Name is *Legion*: For behold a Troop of Sins cometh after it. And for my own Part, when I see a Drunkard, I can scarce, with the holy Prophet, when he looked in *Hazael's* Face, forbear weeping, to consider how many Vices he may fall into, e'er he comes to himself again.

What horrid Incest did righteous *Lot* commit with his own Daughters, when they had made him drunk? And, I doubt not, but there are many amongst you, who have committed such Crimes when you have deprived yourselves of your Reason by drinking, that were you to hear of them, your Heart, like *Nabal's*, after he was told how he had abused *David* when he was drunk, would die within you. And had any one told you, when you were sober, that you would have been guilty of such Crimes, you would have cried out, with *Hazael* before mentioned, *Are thy Servants so many Dogs, that they should do thus?*

But no marvel that Drunkards commit such Crimes: For Drunkenness drives the Holy Spirit from them: they become mere Machines for the Devil to work up to what he pleases; he enters
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into them, as he entered into the Herd of Swine; and no Wonder if they then commit all Unclean-ness, and any other Crime, with Greediness. But this leads me to a

Fifth Consideration, which highly aggravates the Sin of Drunkenness, *viz.* That it separates the Holy Spirit from us.

It is to be hoped, that no one here present need be informed, that before we can be assured that we are Christians indeed, we must receive the Holy Ghost, must be born again from Above, and have the Spirit of GOD witnessing with our Spirits, that we are the Sons of GOD. This, this alone is true Christianity; and without the Cohabitation of this Blessed Spirit in our Hearts, our Righteousness does not exceed the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and we shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of GOD.

But now Drunkards do, in Effect, bid this Blessed Spirit depart from them: For what has he to do with such filthy Swine? No, they have no Lot or Share in the Spirit of the Son of *David*. They have chased him out of their Hearts, by defiling his Temple; I mean their Bodies. And he can no more hold Communion with them, than Light can have Communion with Darkness, or CHRIST have Concord with *Belial*.

The Apostle therefore, in the Words of the Text, exhorts the *Ephesians*, *not to be drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess, but to be filled with the Spirit*; thereby implying, that Drunkenness and the Spirit of GOD could never dwell in the same Heart. And in another Epistle, he bids them *avoid unprofitable Conversation, as a Thing which grieved the Holy Spirit; whereby alone they could be sealed to the Day of Redemption.* And if un-

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profitable Conversation grieves the Holy Spirit, at what an infinite Distance must Drunkenness drive him from the Hearts of Men?

But oh that you were wise! That you would consider what a dreadful Thing it is to have the Spirit of the Living GOD depart from you: For, assure yourselves, if you live without him, you live without GOD in the World. You are in the same miserable forlorn Condition as *Saul* was, when an evil Spirit of the LORD came upon him; and you are only so many Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction. But this brings me to the

Sixth and last Reason I shall urge against the Sin of Drunkenness, that it absolutely unfits a Man for the Enjoyment of GOD in Heaven, and exposes him to his Eternal Wrath.

To see and enjoy GOD, and to be like the blessed Angels, always beholding the Face of our Heavenly Father, in the Glories of his Kingdom, is such an unspeakable Happiness, that even wicked Men, though they will not live the Life of the Righteous, cannot but wish their future State to be like his.

But think you, O ye Drunkards, that you shall ever be Partakers of this Inheritance with the Saints in Light? Do you flatter yourselves, that you, who have made them often the Subject of your drunken Songs, shall now be exalted to sing with them the Heavenly Songs of *Sion*? No, as by Drunkenness you have made your Hearts Cages of unclean Birds, with impure and unclean Spirits must you dwell.

A burning *Tophet*, kindled by GOD's Wrath, is prepared for your Reception, where you must suffer the Vengeance of an Eternal Fire, and in vain cry out for a Drop of Water to cool your
Tongues.

Tongues. Indeed you shall drink, but it shall be a Cup of God's Fury: For in the Hand of the LORD there will be a Cup of Fury, it will be full mixed; and as for the Dregs thereof, all the Drunkards of the Land shall suck them out.

But perhaps you may not believe this Report. These Words may be looked upon by you as idle Tales, and I may seem to you as *Lot* did to his Sons-in-law, when he came to warn them to get up out of *Sodom*, as one that mocketh. But if you believe not me, believe eternal Truth itself, and he has positively declared, that no Drunkard shall ever enter into his Kingdom.

And I call Heaven and Earth to Witness against you this Day, that as surely as the LORD rained Fire and Brimstone, as soon as *Lot* went out of *Sodom*, so surely will God cast you into a Lake of Fire and Brimstone, when he shall come to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Behold then I have told you before; remember you this Day were informed what the End of Drunkenness would be. And I summon you, in the Name of that GOD whom I serve, to meet me at the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, that you may acquit both my Master and me; and confess, with your own Mouths, that your Damnation was of yourselves, and that we were freed from the Blood of you all.

But, LORD, has no one believed our Report? Wilt thou suffer so many Words to be spoken in vain, if it be yet in vain? No, methinks I see some pricked to the Heart, and ready to cry out, in the Language of *David* to *Abigail*, *Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, which sent thee this*

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Day to speak unto us. For surely, unless he had sent thee, this Sin of Drunkenness had been our Ruin. But now, since we find whither it will lead us, we are resolved to drink no Liquor to Excess while the World stands, lest we should be tormented in the Flames of Hell.

But alas! how shall we be delivered from the Power of this Sin? Can the *Ethiopian* change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? So hard, almost, will it be for us who have been accustom'd to be intemperate, to learn to live sober.

But do not despair; for what is impossible with Man, is possible with GOD. Of whom then should you seek for Succour, but of him your LORD? Who, though for this Sin of Drunkenness, he might justly turn away his Face from you; yet if you pour out your Hearts before him in daily Prayer, and ask Assistance from above, it may be GOD will endue you with Power from on High, and make you more than Conquerors through JESUS CHRIST. Had you kept up Communion with him in Prayer, you would not so long, by Drunkenness, have had Communion with Devils. But, like the Prodigal, you have desired to be your own Masters; you have lived without Prayer, depended on your own Strength; and see, alas! on what a broken Reed you have leaned. How soon have you made yourselves like the Beasts that have no Understanding? *But turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways.* Come to him, with the repenting Prodigal, saying, *Father we have sinned, we beseech thee, let not this Sin of Drunkenness have any longer Dominion over us.* Lay hold on CHRIST by Faith, and lo! it shall happen to you even as you will.

A second Means I would recommend to you, in order to get the better of Drunkenness, is to avoid evil Company. For it is the evil Communications of wicked Men, that has drawn so many thousands into this Sin, and so corrupted their good Manners.

But you may say, *If I leave my Companions, I must expect Contempt: For they will certainly despise me for being singular.* And thinkest thou, O Man, ever to enter in at the strait Gate by a true Conversion, without being had in Derision of them that are round about thee? No; though thou mayst be despised, and not go to Heaven, yet thou canst not go to Heaven without being despised: For the Friendship of the World is Enmity with GOD. And they that are born after the Flesh, will persecute those that are born after the Spirit. Let not, therefore, a servile Fear of being despised by a Man that shall die, hinder thy turning unto the Living GOD. For what is a little Contempt? It is but a Vapour which vanisheth away, and cometh not again. Better be derided by a few Companions here, than be made ashamed before Men and Angels hereafter. Better be the Song of a few Drunkards on Earth, than dwell with them where they will be eternally reproaching and cursing each other in Hell. Yet a little while, and they themselves shall praise thy Doings, and shall say, *We, Fools, counted his leaving us to be Folly, and his End to be without Honour: But how is he numbered among the Sons of GOD, and his Lot among the Saints!*

But I hasten to lay down a *Third Means* for those who would overcome this Sin of Drunkenness,—to enter upon a Life of strict Self-denial and Mortification: For this Kind of Sin goeth

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not forth but by Prayer and Fasting. It is true, this may seem a difficult Task; but then, we must thank ourselves for it; for had we begun sooner, our Work would have been the easier. And even now, if you will but strive, the Yoke of Mortification will grow lighter and lighter every Day.

And here, by way of Conclusion to this Discourse, I cannot but exhort all Persons, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to practise a strict Self-denial in eating and drinking. For though the Kingdom of GOD consists not in Meats and Drinks, yet an abstemious Use of, and a frequent total Abstinence from GOD's good Creatures, are great Promoters of the spiritual Life. And perhaps there are more destroyed by living in a regular Sensuality, than even by that very Sin I have now been warning you of. — I know, indeed, that many, who are only almost Christians, and who seek, but do not strive to enter into the Kingdom of GOD, urge a Text of Scripture to justify their Indulgence, saying, *That it is not what entereth into the Man defileth the Man.* And so we grant, when taken moderately; but then they should consider, that it is possible, nay, it is proved by daily Experience, that a Person may eat and drink so much as not to hurt his Body, and yet do infinite Prejudice to his Soul. For Self-Indulgence lulls the Soul into a spiritual Slumber, as well as direct Intemperance; and though the latter may expose us to more Contempt among Men, yet the former, if continued in, will as certainly shut us out from the Presence of GOD. St. Paul knew this full well; and therefore, though he was the spiritual Father of Thousands, and was near upon finish-
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ing his Course, yet he says, it was his daily Practice to keep his Body under, and bring it into Subjection, lest after he had preached to others, he himself should be a Cast-away, that is, disapproved of, or do something that might make him an Offence or Stumbling-block to any of GOD's Children: For of his own, and all other Saints *final Perseverance*, he makes no doubt, as is evident from many of his Epistles; and the Word *Adonumos* bears this Sense, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. and sundry other Places. But why urge I the Apostle's Example, to excite you to a strict Temperance in eating and drinking? Rather let me exhort you only to put in Practice the latter Part of the Text, *to labour to be filled with the Spirit of GOD*, and then you will no longer search the Scriptures to find Arguments for Self-Indulgence; but you will deal sincerely with yourselves, and eat and drink no more at any Time, than what is consistent with the strictest Precepts of the Gospel. O beg of GOD, that you may see how you are fallen in *Adam*, and must be renewed e'er you can be happy, by the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST! Let us beseech him to enlighten us, to see the Treachery of our corrupt Hearts, and how pure and holy these Bodies ought to be; that they ought to be living Temples of the Holy Ghost, and then we shall shew ourselves Men. And thus being made Temples of the Holy Ghost, by his dwelling in our Bodies here, tho' after Death, Worms may destroy them; yet shall they be raised by the same Spirit at the general Resurrection of the Last Day, to be fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious Body hereafter.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

S E R M O N XVII.

The Indwelling of the SPIRIT,
the common Privilege of all
Believers.

JOHN vii. 37, 38, 39.

*In the last Day, that great Day of the Feast,
JESUS stood and cried, saying, If any Man
thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

*He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath
said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of
living Water.*

*But this spake he of the Spirit, which they
that believe on him should receive.*

NOTHING has render'd the Cross of
CHRIST of less Effect, nothing has been
a greater Stumbling-Block and Rock of Offence
to weak Minds, than a Supposition, now current
among us, that most of what is contained in the
Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, was designed only for
our LORD's first and immediate Followers, and
consequently calculated for one or two hundred
Years.—Accordingly, many now read the Life,
Sufferings, Death and Resurrection of JESUS
CHRIST, in the same Manner as learned Men
read

read *Cæsar's Commentaries*, or *the Conquests of Alexander*; as Things rather intended to afford Matter for Speculation, than to be acted over again in and by us.

As this is true of the Doctrines of the Gospel in general, so it is in particular of the Operations of GOD'S Spirit upon the Hearts of Believers, for we no sooner mention the Necessity of our receiving the *Holy Ghost* in these last Days, as well as formerly, but we are look'd upon by some, as Enthusiasts and Madmen; and, by others, represented as wilfully deceiving the People, and undermining the established Constitution of the Church.

Judge ye then, *my Brethren*, whether it is not high Time for the true Ministers of JESUS CHRIST, who have been themselves made Partakers of this Heavenly Gift, to lift up their Voices like a Trumpet; and if they would not have those Souls perish for which the LORD JESUS has shed his precious Blood, to declare with all Boldness, that the Holy Spirit is the common Privilege and Portion of all Believers in all Ages; and that we also, as well as the first Christians, must receive the *Holy Ghost* e'er we can be truly called the Children of GOD.

For this Reason (and also that I might answer the Design of our Church in appointing the present Festival) I have chosen the Words of the Text.

They were spoken by JESUS CHRIST, when, as the Evangelist tells us, he was at the Feast of Tabernacles, which the *Jews* observed according to GOD'S Appointment, in Commemoration of their living in Tents.—At the last Day of this Feast, it was customary for many pious People

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to fetch Water from a certain Place, and bring it on their Heads, singing this Anthem out of *Isaiah*, *And with Joy shall they draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation.*—Our dear Lord JESUS observing this, and it being his constant Practice to spiritualize every Thing he met with, cries out, *If any Man thirsteth, let him come unto me, rather than unto that Well, and drink.*—He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath spoken, (where it is said, God will make Water spring out of a dry Rock, and such like) *out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.*—And that we might know what our Saviour meant by this living Water, the Evangelist immediately adds, *But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

These last Words I shall chiefly insist on in the ensuing Discourse, and shall treat on them in the following Manner.

First, I shall briefly shew what is meant by the Word *Spirit*.

Secondly, I shall shew that this *Spirit* is the common Privilege of all Believers.

Thirdly, I shall shew the Reason on which this Doctrine is founded.

Lastly, I shall conclude with a general Exhortation, to believe on JESUS CHRIST, whereby alone we can be qualified to receive this Spirit.

And, *First*, I am briefly to shew what is meant by the Spirit.

By the *Spirit*, or the *Holy Ghost*, is to be understood the third Person in the ever blessed Trinity, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father

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ther and the Son, proceeding from, yet equal to them both.—For to use the Words of our Church in this Day's Office, that which we believe of the Glory of the *Father*, the same we believe of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, without any Difference or Inequality.

Thus says St. *John*, in his first Epistle, Chap. v. Ver. 7. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one.* And our LORD, when he gave his Apostles Commission to go and teach all Nations, commands them to baptize in the Name of the *Holy Ghost*, as well as of the *Father* and the *Son*.—And St. *Peter*, *Acts* v. Ver. 3. said to *Ananias*, *Why hath Satan filled thine Heart to lye to the Holy Ghost?* And, Ver. 4. he says, *Thou hast not lyed unto Men, but unto GOD.*—From all which Passages, it is plain, that the *Holy Ghost* is truly and properly GOD, as well as the *Father* and the *Son*. This is an unspeakable Mystery, but a Mystery of GOD's revealing, and therefore to be assented to with our whole Hearts.—Seeing GOD is not a Man that he should lye, nor the Son of Man that he should deceive.

I proceed, *Secondly*, to prove that the *Holy Ghost* is the common Privilege of all Believers.

But, here I would not be understood of so receiving the *Holy Ghost*, as to enable us to work Miracles, or shew outward Signs and Wonders. For I allow our Adversaries, that to pretend to be inspired, in this Sense, is being wise above what is written. Perhaps it cannot be proved, that GOD ever interposed in this extraordinary Manner, but when some new Revelation was to be established, as at the first settling of the Mo-

saick and Gospel Dispensation. — And as for my own Part, I cannot but suspect the Spirit of those who insist upon a Repetition of such Miracles at this Time. — For the World being now become nominally Christian, at least, (tho' God knows, little of the Power is left among us) there need not outward Miracles, but only an inward Co-operation of the Holy Spirit with the *Word*, to prove that JESUS is that *Messiah* which was to come into the World.

Besides, it is possible for thee, O Man, to have Faith, so as to be able to remove Mountains, or cast out Devils; nay, thou mightest speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, yea, and bid the Sun stand still in the midst of Heaven; yet, what would all these Gifts of the Spirit avail thee, without being made Partaker of his sanctifying Graces? *Saul* had the Spirit of Government for a while, so as to become another Man, and yet was no true Believer. — And many, who cast out Devils in CHRIST's Name, at the last will be disowned by him. If therefore thou hadst only the Gifts, but was destitute of the Graces of the *Holy Ghost*, they would only serve to lead thee with so much the more Solemnity to Hell.

Here then, I say, we join Issue with our Adversaries, and will readily grant, that we are not in this Sense to be inspired, as were our LORD's first Apostles. But unless Men have Eyes which see not, and Ears which hear not, how can they read the latter Part of the Text, and not confess that the Holy Spirit, in another Sense, is the common Privilege of all Believers, even to the End of the World? — *This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* — Observe, he does not say, they that believe on him

him for one or two Ages, but they that believe on him in general, *i. e.* at all Times, and in all Places.—So that unless we can prove that St. *John* was under a Delusion when he wrote these Words, we must believe that we, even we also, shall receive the *Holy Ghost*, if we believe on the Lord JESUS with our whole Hearts.

Again; our LORD, just before his bitter Passion, when he was about to offer up his Soul an Offering for the Sins of the World; when his Heart was most enlarged, and he would undoubtedly demand the most excellent Gift for his Disciples, prays, that *they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. — I in them, and thou in me, that they be made perfect in one*; that is, that all his true Followers might be united to him by his Holy Spirit, by as real, vital, and mystical an Union, as there is between JESUS CHRIST and the Father. I say all his true Followers.—For it is evident from our LORD's own Words, that he had us and all Believers in View, when he put up this Prayer.—*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their Word*; so that, unless we treat our LORD as the High Priests did, and count him a Blasphemer, we must confess, that all who believe in JESUS CHRIST, through the Word or Ministration of the Apostles, are to be joined to JESUS CHRIST, by being made Partakers of the Holy Spirit.

There's a great Noise made of late, about the Word *Enthusiast*, and it has been cast upon the Preachers of the Gospel, as a Term of Reproach.—But every Christian, in the proper Sense of the Word, must be an *Enthusiast*.—That is,

must be inspired of GOD, or have GOD in him. For who dares say, he is a Christian, till he can say, *GOD is in me?* St. Peter tells us, we have many great and precious Promises, that we may be made Partakers of the Divine Nature.—Our LORD prays, *that we may be one, as the Father and He are One*; and our own Church, in Conformity to these Texts of Scripture, in her excellent Communion-Office, tells us, that those who receive the Sacrament worthily, “ dwell in “ CHRIST, and CHRIST in them; that they “ are one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with “ them.”—And yet Christians in general must have their Names cast out as Evil, and Ministers in particular must be looked upon as Deceivers of the People, for affirming, that we must be really united to GOD, by receiving the HOLY GHOST. Be astonished, O Heavens, at this!

Indeed, I will not say, our Letter-learned Preachers deny this Doctrine in express Words.—But however, they do it in Effect.—For they talk professedly against inward Feelings, and say, we may have GOD’s Spirit without feeling it, which is, in Reality, to deny the Thing itself.—And had I a Mind to hinder the Progress of the Gospel, and to establish the Kingdom of Darkness, I would go about, telling People, they might have the Spirit of GOD, and yet not feel it.

But to return,—When our LORD was about to ascend to his Father, and our Father; to his GOD, and our GOD; he gave his Apostles this Commission, *Go and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*—By the Term, *All Nations*, ’tis allowed, are meant all that should profess

ness to believe on JESUS always, even to the End of the World.—And accordingly by Authority of this Commission, we do baptize them in this and every Age of the Church.—And if this be true, then the Proposition to be proved will be undeniable. For though we translate these Words, *baptizing them in the Name*; yet, as the Name of GOD, in the LORD's Prayer, and several other Places, signifies his Nature, they might as well be translated thus, *baptizing them into the Nature of the Father, into the Nature of the Son, and into the Nature of the Holy Ghost*. And consequently, if we are all to be baptized into the Nature of the *Holy Ghost*, e'er our Baptism be effectual to Salvation, it is evident, that we all must actually receive the *Holy Ghost*, e'er we can say, we truly believe in JESUS CHRIST. For no one can say, that JESUS is *my LORD*, but he that has thus received the *Holy Ghost*.

Numbers of other Texts might be quoted, to make this Doctrine, if possible, still more plain.—But I am astonished, that any, who call themselves Members; much more, that many, who are Preachers of the Church of *England*, should dare so much as open their Lips against it. And yet with Grief, GOD is my Judge, I speak it, Persons of the established Church seem more generally to be ignorant of it, than any Dissenters whatsoever.

But, my dear Brethren, what have you been doing? How often have your Hearts given your Lips the Lie? How often have you offered GOD the Sacrifice of Fools, and had your Prayers turned into Sin, if you approve of, and use our Church-Liturgy, and yet deny the Holy Spirit to be the Portion of all Believers? In the daily Absolution,
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the Minister exhorts the People to pray, that GOD would grant them Repentance, and his Holy Spirit.—In the Collect for *Christmas-Day*, we beseech GOD, that he would daily renew us by his Holy Spirit.—In the last Week's Collect we pray'd that we may evermore rejoice in the Comforts of the *Holy Ghost*.—And in the concluding Prayer, which we put up every Day, we pray not only, that the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the Love of GOD, but that the Fellowship of the *Holy Ghost* may be with us all evermore.

But farther,——A solemn Season is now approaching, I mean the Ember-Days, at the End of which, all that are to be ordained to the Office of a Deacon, are in the Sight of GOD, and in the Presence of the Congregation, to declare that they trust they are inwardly moved by the *Holy Ghost*, to take upon them that Administration.—And to those who are to be ordained Priests, the Bishop is to repeat these solemn Words, *Receive thou the Holy Ghost, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our Hands*.—And yet, Oh that I had no Reason to speak it, many that use our Forms, and many that have witnessed this good Confession, yet dare talk and preach against the Necessity of receiving the *Holy Ghost* now, as well as formerly; and not only so, but cry out against those who do insist upon it, as *Madmen, Enthusiasts, Schismatics, and Underminers* of the Established Constitution.

But you are the Schismatics, you are the Bane of the Church of *England*, who are always crying out, *the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD*; and yet starve the People out of our Communion, by feeding them only with the dry
Husks

Husks of dead Morality, and not bringing out to them the fatted Calf, I mean the Doctrines of the Operations of the blessed Spirit of GOD.— But here's the Misfortune; many of us are not led by, and therefore no Wonder, that we cannot talk feelingly of the HOLY GHOST—We subscribe to our Articles, and make them serve for a Key to get into Church-Preferment, and then preach contrary to those very Articles to which we have subscribed—Far be it from me, to charge all the Clergy with this hateful Hypocrisy.—No, blessed be GOD, there are some left among us, who dare maintain the Doctrines of the Reformation, and preach the Truth, as it is in JESUS.—But I speak the Truth in CHRIST, I lye not—The Generality of the Clergy are fallen from our Articles, and do not speak agreeable to them, or to the Form of sound Words, delivered in the Scriptures.—Wo be unto such blind Leaders of the Blind! How can you escape the Damnation of Hell? It is not all your Learning (falsely so called) it is not all your Preferments can keep you from the just Judgment of GOD.—Yet a little while and we shall all appear before the Tribunal of CHRIST—There, there will I meet you—There JESUS CHRIST, that great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls shall determine, who are the false Prophets, who are the Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing—Those who say, that we must now receive and feel the HOLY GHOST, or those who exclaim against it, as the Doctrine of Devils.

But I can no more. It is an unpleasing Task to censure any Order of Men, especially those who are in the Ministry—Nor would any thing excuse it but Necessity: That Necessity which
extorted

extorted from our LORD himself so many Woes against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, the Letter-learned Rulers and Teachers of the *Jewish Church*— And surely, if I could bear to see People perish for lack of Knowledge, and yet be silent towards those who keep from them the Key of true Knowledge, the very Stones would cry out.

Would we restore the Church to its primitive Dignity, the only Way is to live and preach the Doctrine of CHRIST, and the Articles to which we have subscribed. Then we shall find the Number of Dissenters will daily decrease, and the Church of *England* become the Joy of the whole Earth.

I am now, in the *Third Place*, to shew the Reasonableness of this Doctrine.

I say, the Reasonableness of this Doctrine— For however it may seem Foolishness to the natural Man, yet to those who have tasted of the good Word of Life, and have felt the Power of the World to come, it will appear to be founded on the highest Reason, and is capable, to those who have Eyes to see, even of a Demonstration— I say of a Demonstration: For it stands on this Self-evident Supposition, that we are fallen Creatures, or, to use the Scripture Expression, *Have all died in Adam*.

I know indeed 'tis now no uncommon Thing amongst us, to deny the Doctrine of original Sin, as well as the Divinity of JESUS CHRIST, who is GOD over all, blessed forever— But it is incumbent on those who deny it, first to disprove the Authority of the Holy Scriptures— If thou canst prove, thou Unbeliever, that the Book, which we call *The Bible*, does not contain the lively Oracles of GOD; if thou canst shew, that
holy

holy Men of Old, did not write this Book, as they were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, then will we give up the Doctrine of original Sin-- But unless thou canst do this, we must insist upon it, that we are all conceived and born in Sin; if for no other, yet for this one Reason, because that GOD, who cannot lye, has told us so.

But what has Light to do with Darkness, or polite Infidels with the Bible? Alas! as they are Strangers to the Power, so they are generally as great Strangers to the Word of GOD. And therefore, if we will preach to them, we must preach from their Hearts: For talking in the Language of the Scripture, is but like talking in an unknown Tongue. Tell me then, O Man, whosoever thou art, that deniest the Doctrine of original Sin, if thy Conscience be not seared as with a hot Iron! Tell me, if thou dost not find thyself by Nature to be a motly Mixture of Brute and Devil? I know these Terms will stir up the whole *Pharisee* in thy Heart; but let not *Satan* hurry thee hence. Stop a little, and let us reason together. Dost thou not find, that by Nature thou art prone to Pride? Otherwise, wherefore art thou now offended? Again, Dost not thou find in thyself the Seeds of Malice, Revenge, and all Uncharitableness? And what are these but the very Tempers of the Devil? Again, Do we not all by Nature follow, and suffer ourselves to be led by our natural Appetites, always looking downwards, never looking upwards to that GOD, in whom we live, move, and have our Being? And what is this but the very Nature of the Beasts that perish? Out of thy own Heart therefore will I oblige thee to confess, what an inspired Apostle has long since told us, that the whole World by Nature

Nature lies in the Wicked One, *i. e.* the Devil; that we are no better than those whom St. *Jude* calls *Brute Beasts*. For we have Tempers in us all by Nature, that prove to a Demonstration, that we are altogether Earthly, Sensual, Devilish.

And this, by the Way, will serve as another Argument, to prove the Reality of the Operations of the Blessed Spirit on the Hearts of Believers, against those false Professors, who deny there is any such Thing as Influences of the Holy Spirit that may be felt. For if they will grant that the Devil worketh, and that so as to be felt in the Hearts of the Children of Disobedience (which they must grant, unless they will give an Apostle the Lye) where is the Wonder that the good Spirit should have the same Power over those that are truly obedient to the Faith of **JESUS CHRIST**?

But to return. If it be true then, that we are all by Nature a motly Mixture of Brute and Devil, it is evident, that we all must receive the *Holy Ghost*, e'er we can dwell with and enjoy **GOD**.

When you read how the Prodigal in the Gospel was reduced to so low a Condition, as to eat Husks with Swine, and how *Nebuchadnezzar* was turned out, to graze with Oxen, I am confident, you pity their unhappy State. And when you hear, how **JESUS CHRIST** will say, at the last Day, to all that are not born again of God, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, do not your Hearts shrink within you, with a secret Horror? And if Creatures with only our Degree of Goodness cannot bear even the Thoughts of dwelling with Beasts or Devils, to whose Nature

we are so nearly allied, how do we imagine, God, who is infinite Goodness and Purity itself, can dwell with us, while we are Partakers of both their Natures? We might as well think to reconcile Heaven and Hell.

When *Adam* had eaten the forbidden Fruit, he fled and hid himself from God. Why? because he was naked; that is, he was alienated from the Life of God, the due Punishment of his Disobedience. Now we are all by Nature naked and void of God, as he was at that Time, and consequently, 'till we are changed, and cloathed upon by a Divine Nature again, we must fly from God also.

Hence then appears the Reasonableness of our being obliged to receive the Spirit of God. It is founded on the Doctrine of Original Sin. And therefore you will always find that those who talk against feeling the Operations of the *Holy Ghost*, very rarely, or very slightly at least, mention our Fall in *Adam*. No, they refer St. *Paul's* Account of the Depravity of Unbelievers, only to those of old Time. Whereas 'tis obvious, on the contrary, that we are all equally included under the Guilt and Consequences of our first Parent's Sin, even as others; and to use the Language of our own Church-Article, bring into the World with us a Corruption, which renders us liable to God's Wrath, and Eternal Damnation.

Should I preach to you any other Doctrine, I should wrong my own Soul; I should be found a false Witness towards God and you. And he that preaches any other Doctrine, howsoever dignified and distinguished, shall bear his Punishment, whosoever he be.

From

From this plain Reason then appears the Necessity why we, as well as the first Apostles, in this Sense, must receive the Spirit of GOD.

For the great Work of Sanctification, or making us holy, is particularly referred to the Holy Ghost. And therefore our LORD says, *Unless a Man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD.*

For JESUS CHRIST came down to save us, not only from the Guilt, but also from the Power of Sin. And however often we have repeated our Creed, and told GOD we believe in the Holy Ghost, yet if we have not believed in him, so as to be really united to JESUS CHRIST by him, we have no more Concord with JESUS CHRIST than *Belial* himself.

And now, my Brethren, what shall I say more? Tell me, are not many of you offended at what has been said already? Do not some of you think, though I mean well, yet I have carried the Point a little too far? Are not others ready to cry out, If this be true, who then can be saved? Is not this driving People into Despair?

Yes, I ingeniously confess it is. But into what Despair? A Despair of Mercy through CHRIST? No, GOD forbid; but a Despair of living with GOD without receiving the Holy Ghost. And I would to GOD, that not only all you that hear me this Day, but that the whole World was filled with *this Despair*. Believe me, my Brethren, I have been doing no more than you allow your bodily Physicians to do every Day. If you have a Wound in your Bodies, and are in earnest about a Cure, you bid the Surgeon probe it to the very Bottom. And shall not the Physician of your Souls

Souls be allowed the same Freedom? And what have I been doing, but searching your natural Wounds, that I might convince you of your Danger, and put you upon applying to JESUS CHRIST for a Remedy? Indeed I have dealt with you as gently as I could; and now I have wounded, I come to heal you.

For I was, in the Last Place, to exhort you all to come to JESUS CHRIST by Faith, whereby you, even you also, shall receive the Holy Ghost. *For this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

This, this is what I long to come to. Hitherto I have been preaching only the Law, but behold I bring you glad Tidings of great Joy. If I have wounded you before, be not afraid; behold, I now bring a Remedy for all your Wounds. For notwithstanding you are all now sunk into the Nature of the Beast and Devil, yet if you truly believe on JESUS CHRIST, you shall receive the sanctifying Spirit promised in the Text, and be restored to the glorious Liberties of the Sons of GOD. I say, if you believe on JESUS CHRIST. *For by Faith we are saved; it is not of Works, lest any one should boast.* And however some Men may say, there is a Fitness required in the Creature, and that we must have a Righteousness of our own, before we can lay hold on the Righteousness of CHRIST; yet, if we believe the Scripture, *Salvation is the free Gift of GOD in CHRIST JESUS our LORD; and whosoever believeth on him with his whole Heart, though his Soul be as black as Hell itself, shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.*—Behold then, I stand up, and cry out in this great Day of the Feast, *Let every one that thirsteth come unto JESUS CHRIST,*
and

and drink. He that believeth on him, out of his Belly shall flow not only Streams or Rivulets, but whole Rivers of living Water. This I speak, my Brethren, of the Spirit which they that believe on JESUS shall certainly receive.—For JESUS CHRIST is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever. He is the Way, the Truth, the Resurrection, and the Life.—Whosoever believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—There is no Respect of Persons with JESUS CHRIST.—High and low, rich and poor, one with another, may come to him with an humble Confidence, if they draw near by Faith.—From him we may all receive Grace upon Grace, i. e. every Grace that is in CHRIST shall be transcribed into Believers Hearts.—For JESUS CHRIST is full of Grace and Truth, and ready to save to the uttermost all that by a true Faith turn unto him.—Indeed the Poor generally receive the Gospel, and GOD has chosen the Poor in this World rich in Faith.—But though not many Mighty, not many Noble are called; and though it be easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of GOD, yet even to you that are rich do I now freely offer Salvation by JESUS CHRIST, if you will renounce yourselves, and come to JESUS CHRIST as poor Sinners. I say, as poor Sinners; for the Poor in Spirit are only so blessed as to have a Right to the Kingdom of GOD.—JESUS CHRIST calls none to him but those that thirst after his Righteousness, and feel themselves weary and heavy laden with the Burden of their Sins.—JESUS CHRIST justifies the Ungodly. He came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.

Do not then say you are unworthy; for this is a faithful and true Saying, and worthy of all Men to be received, That JESUS CHRIST came into the World to save Sinners; and if you are the chief of Sinners, if you *feel* yourselves such, and believe on him, verily JESUS CHRIST came into the World chiefly to save you.—When *Joseph* was called out of the Prison-House to *Pharaoh's* Court, we are told, that he staid some Time to prepare himself; but do you come with all your Prison Cloaths about you; come poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked as you are, and GOD the Father shall receive you with open Arms, as he did the returning Prodigal. He shall cover your Nakedness with the best Robe of his dear Son's Righteousness, shall seal you with the Signet of his Spirit, and feed you with the fatted Calf, even with the Comforts of the Holy Ghost.—Oh let there then be Joy in Heaven over some of you believing.—Let me not go back to my Master, and say, LORD, they will not believe my Report.—Harden no longer your Hearts, but open them wide, and let the King of Glory in.—Believe me, I am willing to go to Prison or Death for you; but I am not willing to go to Heaven without you.—The Love of JESUS CHRIST constrains me to lift up my Voice like a Trumpet.—My Heart is now full—Out of the Abundance of the Love which I have for your precious and immortal Souls my Mouth now speaketh.—And I could now not only continue my Discourse till Midnight, but I could speak till I could speak no more.—And why should I despair of any? No, I can despair of no one, when I consider JESUS CHRIST has had Mercy on such a Wretch as I am.—However you may

think of yourselves, I know that by Nature I am but half a Devil, and half a Beast. — The free Grace of CHRIST prevented me. — He saw me in my Blood, He passed by me, and said unto me, *Live.* — And the same Grace which was sufficient for me, is sufficient for you also. — Behold, the same blessed Spirit is ready to breathe on all your dry Bones, if you will believe on JESUS CHRIST whom GOD has sent. — Indeed you can never believe on, or serve a better Master; one that is more mighty, or more willing to save. — Indeed I can say the LORD CHRIST is gracious, his Yoke is easy, his Burden exceeding light. — After you have served him many Years, like the Servants under the Law, was he willing to discharge you, you would say, We love our Master, and will not go from him. — Come then, my guilty Brethren, come and believe on the LORD that bought you with his precious Blood. — Look up by Faith, and see him whom you have pierced. — Behold him bleeding, panting, dying! — Behold him with Arms stretched out ready to receive you all. — Cry unto him as the penitent Thief did, LORD, remember us now thou art in thy Kingdom, and he shall say to your Souls, *Shortly shall you be with me in Paradise.* — For those whom CHRIST justifies, them he also glorifies, even with that Glory which he enjoyed with the Father before the World began. — Do not say, *I have bought a Piece of Ground, and must needs go and see it; I have bought a Yoke of Oxen, and must needs go prove them; I have married a Wife, I am engaged in an eager Pursuit after the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, and therefore cannot come.* — Do not fear having your Name cast out as Evil, or being accounted a Fool

common Privilege of all Believers. 315

a Fool for CHRIST's Sake.—Yet a little while, and you shall shine like the Stars in the Firmament for ever.—Only believe, and JESUS CHRIST shall be to you Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and eternal Redemption.—Your Bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, and your Souls filled with all the Fulness of GOD.

Which may GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

SERMON XVIII.

The wise and foolish Virgins.

MATTH. XXV. 14.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour in which the Son of Man cometh.

THE Apostle St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, informs us, *That it is appointed for all Men once to die; after that, says he, comes Judgment.*—And I think if any Consideration be sufficient to awaken a sleeping drowsy World, it must be this.—That there will be a Day wherein these Heavens shall be wrapt up like a Scrawl, this Element melt with fervent Heat, the Earth and all the Things therein be burnt up, and every Soul, of every Nation and Language, summoned to appear before the dreadful Tribunal of the righteous Judge of Quick and Dead, to receive Rewards and Punishments according to the Deeds done in their Bodies.—The great Apostle just mentioned, when brought before *Felix*, could think of no better Means to convert that sinful Man, than to reason of Temperance, Righteousness, and more especially of a Judgment

Judgment to come.—The first might in some measure affect, but I am persuaded it was the last Consideration, I mean of a Judgment to come, that made him tremble; and so bad as the World is grown, yet there are few have their Consciences so far seared, as to deny that there will be a Reckoning hereafter. The promiscuous Dispensations of Providence in this Life, wherein we see good Men afflicted, destitute, tormented, and the Wicked permitted triumphantly to ride over their Heads, has been always looked upon as an indisputable Argument, by the Generality of Men, that there will be a Day in which GOD will judge the World in Righteousness, and administer true Equity unto his People.—Some indeed are so bold as to deny it, while they are engaged in the Pursuit of the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life.—But follow them to their Death-beds, ask them, when their Souls are ready to launch into Eternity, what they then think of a Judgment to come? and they will tell you they dare not give their Consciences the Lie any longer.—They feel a fearful Looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation in their Hearts.—*Since then these Things are so*, does it not highly concern each of us, my Brethren, before we come on a Bed of Sickness, seriously to examine how the Account stands between GOD and our Souls, and how it will fare with us in that Day? As for the openly Prophane, the Drunkard, the Whoremonger, the Adulterer, and such like, there's no Doubt of what will become of them,—without Repentance they shall never enter into the Kingdom of GOD, and his CHRIST: No; their Damnation slumbereth not; a burning fiery Tophet, kindled

by the Fury of GOD's eternal Wrath, is prepared for their Reception, wherein they must suffer the Vengeance of an eternal Fire.—Nor is there the least Doubt of the State of true Believers.—For tho' they be despised and rejected of natural Men, yet being born again of GOD, they are Heirs of GOD, and joint Heirs with CHRIST.—They have the Earnest of the promised Inheritance in their Hearts, and are assured, that a new and living Way is made open for them, into the *Holy of Holies*, by the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, through which an abundant Entrance shall be administered to them at the great Day of Accounts. The only Question is, What will become of the *almost Christian*, one that is content to go, as he thinks, in a middle Way to Heaven, without being prophane on the one Hand, or, as he falsely imagined, righteous over-much on the other?—Multitudes there are in every Congregation, and consequently here present, of this Stamp.—And what is worst of all, 'tis more easy to convince the most notorious Publicans and Sinners of their being out of a State of Salvation, than any of these.—Notwithstanding, if JESUS CHRIST may be our Judge, they shall as certainly be rejected and disowned by him at the last Day, as tho' they lived in open Defiance of all his Laws.—For what says our LORD in the Parable of, which the Words of the Text are a Reddition or Conclusion, and which I intend to make the Subject of my present Discourse.—*Then*, that is, at the Day of the Judgment, which he had been discoursing of in the foregoing, and prosecutes in this Chapter, *shall the Kingdom of Heaven*, i.e. the State of Professors in the Gospel Church,

be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. In which Words is a manifest Allusion to a Custom prevailing in our LORD's Time among the Jews, at Marriage Solemnities, which were generally at Night, and at which it was customary for the Persons of the Bride-Chamber to go out in Procession, with many Lights, to meet the Bridegroom.—By the Bridegroom then here spoken of, you are to understand JESUS CHRIST.—The Church, *i. e.* True Believers, are his Spouse,—he is united to them by one Spirit, even in this Life; but the solemnizing of these sacred Nuptials is reserved till the Day of Judgment, when he shall come to take them home to himself, and present them before Men and Angels, as his Purchase, to his Father, without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing.—By the Ten Virgins we are to understand the Professors of Christianity in general.—All are called Virgins, because all are called to be Saints. Whosoever names the Name of CHRIST, is obliged by that very Profession to depart from all Iniquity. The pure and chaste in Heart are the only Persons that will be so blessed as to see GOD.—As CHRIST was born of a Virgin's Womb, so he can dwell in none but Virgin Souls, made pure and holy by the Cohabitation of his Holy Spirit. But what says the Apostle, *All are not Israelites that are of Israel,*—*All are not Christians that are called after the Name of CHRIST:*—No, says our LORD, in the 2d Verse, *Five of those Virgins were wise, i. e.* True Believers, *and Five were foolish, i. e.* Formal Hypocrites. But why are Five said to be wise, and the other Five foolish?—Hear what our LORD says in the following Verses; *They*

that were foolish took their Lamps, and took no Oil with them: But the wise took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps. They that were foolish took their Lamps, i. e. the Lamp of an outward Profession. They would go to Church, say over several Manuals of Prayers, come perhaps into a Field to hear a Sermon, give at a Collection, and receive the Sacrament constantly, nay, oftner than once a Month.—But then here lay the Mistake, they had no Oil in their Lamps, — no Principle of Grace, no living Faith in their Hearts, without which, tho' we should give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and our Bodies to be burnt, it would profit us nothing. In short, they were exact, nay perhaps superstitious Bigots as to the Form, but all the while they were Strangers to, and, in effect, denied the Power of Godliness in their Hearts. They would go to Church, but at the same Time, think it no Harm to go to a Ball or an Assembly, notwithstanding they promised at their Baptism, *to renounce the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World.* — They were so exceeding fearful of being righteous over-much, that they would even persecute those that were truly devout, if they attempted to go a Step farther than themselves. In one Word, they never effectually felt the Power of the World to come. They thought they might be Christians without so much inward Feeling, and therefore, notwithstanding their high Pretensions, had only a Name to live.

And now, Sirs, let me pause a while, and in the Name of GOD, whom I endeavour to serve in the Gospel of his dear Son, give me Leave to ask one Question. Whilst I have been drawing, tho' in Miniature, the Character of these foolish Virgins,

Virgins, have not many of your Consciences made the Application, and with a small, still, tho' articulate Voice, said, Thou Man, thou Woman art one of those foolish Virgins, for thy Sentiments and Practice agree thereto? Do not stifle, but encourage these Convictions; and who knows but that LORD, who is rich in Mercy to all that call upon him faithfully, may so work upon you even by this Foolishness of Preaching, as to make you wise Virgins before you return home?

What they were you shall know immediately; *But the wise*, says our LORD, ver. 4. *took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps.* — Observe, the wise, that is, the true Believers, had their Lamps as well as the foolish Virgins; for Christianity does not require us to cast off all outward Forms. We may use Forms, and yet not be formal: For Instance, it is possible to worship God in a set Form of Prayer, and yet worship him in Spirit and in Truth. And therefore, Brethren, let us not judge one another. The wise Virgins had their Lamps; herein did not lie the Difference between them and the foolish, that one worshipped God with a Form, and the other did not: No; as the *Pharisee* and *Publican* went up to the Temple to pray, so these wise and foolish Virgins might go to the same Place of Worship, and sit under the same Ministry; but then the wise took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps; they kept up the Form, but did not rest in it; their Words in Prayer were the Language of their Hearts, and they were no Strangers to inward Feelings; they were not afraid of searching Doctrine, nor affronted when Ministers told them they deserve to be damned; they were not self-

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righteous,

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righteous, but were willing that JESUS CHRIST should have all the Glory of their Salvation; they were convinced that the Merits of JESUS CHRIST were to be apprehended only by Faith, but yet were they as careful to maintain good Works, as tho' they were to be justified by them: In short, their Obedience flowed from Love and Gratitude, and was chearful, constant, uniform, universal, like that Obedience which the Holy Angels pay our Father in Heaven.

Here then let me exhort you to pause again; and if any of you can faithfully apply these Characters to your Hearts, give GOD the Glory, and take the Comfort to your own Souls; you are not false but true Believers. JESUS CHRIST has been made of GOD to you Wisdom, even that Wisdom, whereby you shall be made wise unto Salvation. GOD sees a Difference between you and foolish Virgins, if natural Men will not. You need not be uneasy if one Chance and Fate in this Life may happen to you both. I say, one Chance and Fate; for ver. 5. *while the Bridegroom tarried*, i. e. in the Space of Time which passed between our LORD's Ascension and his coming again to Judgment, *they all slumbered and slept*. The wise as well as foolish died, for Dust we are, and to Dust we must return. It's no Reflection at all upon the Divine Goodness, that Believers, as well as Hypocrites, must pass thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death; for CHRIST has taken the Sting out of it, so that we need fear no Evil. It is to them a Passage to everlasting Life. Death is only terrible to those that have no Hope, because they live without Faith in the World. Whosoever there are amongst you, that have received the First-fruits of the Spirit,

rit, I am persuaded you are ready to cry out with holy *Jab*, We would not live here always, we long to be dissolved, that we may be with JESUS CHRIST; and tho' Worms must destroy our Bodies as well as others, yet we are content, being assured that our Redeemer liveth, that he will stand at the latter Days upon the Earth, and that in our Flesh we shall see GOD.

But it is not so with Hypocrites and Unbelievers beyond the Grave; for what says our Lord? *And at Midnight*; observe, at Midnight, when all was hush'd and quiet, and no one dreaming of any such Thing, *a Cry was made*; The Voice of the Arch-Angel and the Trump of GOD was heard sounding this general Alarm; *To Things in Heaven, to Things in Earth, and to Things in the Waters under the Earth, BEHOLD—* mark how this awful Summons is usher'd in with the Word BEHOLD—to engage our Attention? *Behold the Bridegroom cometh!* even JESUS CHRIST, the Desire of Nations, the Bridegroom of his Spouse the Church! Because he tarried for a while to exercise the Faith of Saints, and give Sinners Space to repent, Scoffers were apt to cry out, Where is the Promise of his coming? But the LORD is not slack concerning his Promise, as these Men account Slackness—For *Behold* he that was to come now cometh, and will not tarry any longer: He cometh to be glorified in his Saints, and to take Vengeance on them that know not GOD, and have not obey'd his Gospel: He cometh not as a poor despised *Galilean*; not to be stabled in a stinking Manger; not to be despised and rejected of Men; not to be blindfolded, spit upon, and buffeted; not to be nailed to an accursed Tree; not as the Son
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O Man, but as he really was the eternal Son of an eternal God: He cometh riding on the Wings of the Wind, in the Glory of the Father and his Holy Angels, and to be had in everlasting Reverence of all that shall be round about him — *Go ye forth to meet him* — arise, ye Dead, ye foolish as well as wise Virgins, arise and come to Judgment. Multitudes, no doubt, that heard this awakening Cry, would have rejoiced if the Rocks might fall on, and the Hills cover them from the Presence of the LAMB: What would they give, if as they lived as Beasts, they might now die like Beasts that perish? How would they rejoice if those same Excuses which they had made on this side Eternity for not attending on Holy Ordinances, would now serve to keep them from appearing before the heavenly Bridegroom! But as *Adam*, notwithstanding his Fig-Leaves, and the Trees of the Garden, could not hide himself from God, when arrested with an — *Adam*, where art thou? So now, the Decree is gone forth, and the Trump of God has given its last Sound, all Tongues, People, Nations and Languages, both wise and foolish Virgins must come into his Presence, and bow beneath his Footstool; even *Pontius Pilate*, *Annas* and *Caiaphas*; even the proud persecuting High-Priests and *Pharisees* of this Generation, must now appear before him: For says our LORD, *then, i. e.* when the Cry was made, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!* in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, the Graves were opened, the Sea gave up its Dead, and all those Virgins, both wise and foolish, *arose and trimmed their Lamps, i. e.* endeavoured to put themselves in a proper Posture to meet the Bridegroom.

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But how may we imagine the foolish Virgins were surprized, when notwithstanding their high Thoughts and proud Imaginations of their Security, they now find themselves wholly naked and void of that inward Holiness and Purity of Heart, without which no Man living at that Day shall comfortably meet the LORD! I doubt not, but many of these foolish Virgins, whilst in this World, were cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, fared sumptuously every Day, and would disdain to set the wise Virgins, some of which might be as poor as *Lazarus*, even with the Dogs of their Flock. These were looked upon by them as Enthusiasts and Madmen, as Persons that were Righteous over-much, and who intended to turn the World upside down: But now Death hath opened their Eyes, and convinced them to their Eternal Sorrow, that he is not a true Christian who is only one outwardly. Now they find (tho' alas! too late) they, and not the wise Virgins, had been beside themselves. Now their proud Hearts are made to stoop, their lofty Looks are brought low; and as *Dives* entreated that *Lazarus* might dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and be sent to cool his Tongue, so these foolish Virgins, these formal Hypocrites, are obliged to turn Beggars to those whom they once despised—*Give us of your Oil*—Oh! impart to us a little of that Grace and Holy Spirit, for the insisting on which we Fools accounted your Lives Mad-ness; for alas! our Lamps are gone out—we had only the Form of Godliness—we were whited Sepulchres—we were Heart-Hypocrites—we contented ourselves with desiring to be good; and tho' confident of Salvation whilst we lived, yet our Hope is entirely gone, now God has

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taken away our Souls; give us therefore, Oh! give us, tho' we once despised you, gives us of your Oil, for our Lamps of an outward Profession, transient Convictions, are quite gone out.

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my People, saith the LORD, with this.—My Brethren in CHRIST, hear what the foolish say to the wise Virgins, and learn in Patience to possess your Souls. If you are true Followers of the lowly JESUS, I am persuaded you have your Names cast out, and all manner of Evil spoken falsely against you, for his Name-Sake; for no one ever did or will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, without suffering Persecution; nay, I doubt not, but your chief Foes are those of your own Household: Tell me, do not your carnal Relations and Friends vex your tender Souls Day by Day, in bidding you spare yourselves, and take heed lest you go too far: And as you passed along to come and hear the Word of GOD, have you not heard many a *Pharisee* cry out, Here comes another Troop of his Followers! Brethren, be not surprized, CHRIST'S Servants were always the World's Fools; you know it hated him before it hated you. Rejoice and be exceeding glad. Yet a little while, and *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*, and then shall you hear these formal scoffing *Pharisees* saying unto you, *Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out.* When you are reviled, revile not again: When you suffer, threaten not; commit your Souls into the Hands of him that judgeth righteously: For behold the Day cometh when the Children of GOD shall speak for themselves.

The wise Virgins, in the Parable, no doubt endured the same cruel Mockings as you may do; but as the Lamb before the Shearers is dumb, so
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in this Life opened they not their Mouths; but now we find they can give their Enemies an Answer: *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* These Words are not to be understood as tho' they were spoken in an insulting Manner; for true Charity teaches us to use the worst of Sinners, and our most bitter Enemies, with the Meekness and Gentleness of CHRIST: Tho' *Dives* was in Hell, yet *Abraham* does not say, Thou Villain, but only, *Son remember*: And I am persuaded, had it been in the Power of these wise Virgins, they would have dealt with the foolish Virgins, as, GOD knows, I would willingly deal with my most inveterate Enemies, not only give them of their Oil, but also exalt them to the Right Hand of GOD.—It was not then for want of Love, but for fear of wanting a Sufficiency for themselves, that made them return this Answer, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you*: For they that have most Grace have none to spare; none but self-righteous, foolish Virgins think they are good enough, or have already attained.—Those who are truly wise are always most distrustful of themselves, pressing forwards to the Things that are before, and think it well if after they have done all, they can make their Calling and Election sure—*Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* These Words indeed seem to be spoken in a triumphant, but certainly they were utter'd in the most compassionate Manner, *go ye to them that sell, and buy for yourselves*: Unhappy Virgins! you accounted our Lives Folly. Whilst with you in the Body, how often have you condemned us for
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our Zeal in running to hear the Word, and look'd upon us as Enthusiasts, for talking about and affirming, that we must be led by the Spirit, and walk by the Spirit, and feel the Spirit of God witnessing with our Spirits, that we are his Children? But now you would be glad to be Partakers of this Privilege, but it is not ours to give. You contented yourselves with seeking, when you should have been striving to enter in at the strait Gate.—And now go to them that sell, if you can, and buy for yourselves.

And what say you to this, ye foolish formal Professors? For I doubt not but Curiosity and Novelty hath brought many such, even to this despised Place, to hear a Sermon. Can you hear this Reply to the foolish Virgins, and yet not tremble? Why, yet a little while, and thus it shall be done to you. Rejoice and bolster yourselves up in your Duties and Forms; endeavour to cover your Nakedness with the Fig-Leaves of an outward Profession and a legal Righteousness, and despise the true Servants of CHRIST as much as you please, yet know, that all your Hopes will fail you when God brings you into Judgment. *For not he who commendeth himself is justified, but he whom the LORD commendeth.*

But to return; we do not hear any Reply the foolish Virgins make. No, their Consciences condemned them; like the Person in the Parable, without a Wedding-Garment, they are struck dumb, and are now filled with anxious Thoughts how they shall buy Oil, that they may lift up their Heads before the Bridegroom. *But whilst they went to buy,* ver. 10. *i. e.* whilst they were thinking what they should do, the Bridegroom, the Lord JESUS, the Head, the King, the Husband

band of his Spouse the Church, cometh attended with Thousands and Twenty times Ten Thousands of Saints and Angels, publickly to count up his Jewels; *and they that were ready,*—the wise Virgins who had Oil in their Lamps, and were sealed by his Spirit to the Day of Redemption, these having on a Wedding Garment of an imputed Righteousness, and a new Nature, *went in with him to the Marriage.*

But who can express the Transports that these wise Virgins felt, when they were thus admitted; in a holy Triumph, into the Presence and full Enjoyment of him whom their Souls hungred and thirsted after! No doubt they had tasted of his Love, and by Faith had often fed on him in their Hearts, when sitting down to commemorate his last Supper here on Earth; but how full may we think their Hearts and Tongues were of his Praises, when they see themselves sit down together to eat Bread in his Heavenly Kingdom! And what was best of all, *the Door was shut*, and shut them in, to enjoy the ever blessed God, and the Company of Angels and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, without Interruption for evermore. I say, without Interruption; for in this Life, their Eyes often gushed out with Water, because Men kept not God's Law; and they could never come to appear before the Lord, or to hear his Word, but Satan and his Emissaries would come also to disturb them; but now *the Door is shut*, now there is a perfect Communion of Saints, which they in vain longed for in this lower World; now Tares no longer grow up with the Wheat; not one single Hypocrite or Unbeliever can screen himself amongst them.—

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Now the Wicked cease from troubling, and now their weary Souls enjoy an everlasting Rest.

Once more, O Believers, let me exhort you in Patience to possess your Souls. GOD, if he has freely justified you by Faith in his Son, and given you his Spirit, has seal'd you to be his; and has secured you as surely as he secured *Noah*, when he locked him in the Ark. But though Heirs of GOD, and joint Heirs with CHRIST, and neither Men or Devils can pluck you out of your heavenly Father's Hands, yet you must be tossed about with manifold Temptations; but lift up your Heads, the Day of your perfect compleat Redemption draweth nigh. — Behold the Bridegroom cometh to take you to himself, the Door shall be shut, and you shall be forever with the LORD.

But I even tremble to tell you, O nominal Christians, that the Door will be shut, I mean the Door of Mercy, never, never to be opened to give you Admission, tho' you should continue knocking to all Eternity. For thus speaks our LORD, *v. 11. Afterwards, i. e. after those that were ready had went in, and the Door was shut; after they had, to their Sorrow, found that no Oil was to be bought, no Grace to be procured, came also the other Virgins; and, as Esau, after Jacob had got the Blessing, cried with an exceeding bitter Cry, Bless me, even me also, Oh my Father; so they came saying, LORD, LORD, open to us. — Observe the Importunity of these foolish Virgins, implied in these Words, LORD, LORD. — Whilst in the Body, I suppose they only read, but did not pray over their Prayers. If you would tell them, they should Pray with-*

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out ceasing, they should pray from their Hearts, and feel the Want of what they pray'd for; they would answer, They could not tell what you mean by inward Feelings; that GOD did not require us to be always on our Knees, but if a Man did justly, and loved Mercy, and did as the Church Forms required him, it was as much as the LORD required at his Hands.

I fear, Sirs, too many amongst us are of this Mind. Nay, I fear there are many so polite, so void of the Love of GOD, as to think it too great a Piece of Self-Denial, to rise early to offer up a Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving acceptable to GOD thro' JESUS CHRIST. If any such, by the good Providence of GOD, are brought hither this Morning, I beseech you consider your Ways, and remember, if you are not awakened out of your Spiritual Lethargy, and live a Life of Prayer here, you shall in vain cry out with the foolish Virgins, *LORD, LORD, open unto us*, hereafter.—Observe, further, the Impudence, as well as Importunity of these other Virgins; *LORD, LORD*, say they,—as tho' they were intimately acquainted with the Holy JESUS. Like Numbers amongst us, who because they go to Church, repeat their Creeds, and receive the blessed Sacrament, think they have a Right to call JESUS their Saviour, and dare call GOD their Father, when they put up the LORD's Prayer. But JESUS is not your Saviour. The Devil, not GOD, is your Father, unless your Hearts are purified by Faith, and you are born again from Above. It's not merely being baptized by Water, but being born again of the Holy Ghost that must qualify you for Salvation; and it will do you no Service at the Great Day, to say unto CHRIST, LORD,
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my Name is in the Register of such and such a Parish.—I am persuaded, the foolish Virgins could say this and more; but what Answer did JESUS make? He answered and said, ver. 12. *Verily, I say unto you*: He puts the Word VERILY, to assure them he was in earnest.—*I say unto you,—I who am Truth itself,—I whom you have owned in Words, but in Works denied, VERILY, I say unto you, I know you not.* These Words must not be understood literally; for whatever Arians and Socinians may say to the contrary, yet we affirm, that JESUS CHRIST is GOD, GOD blessed forever, and therefore knoweth all Things. He saw Nathaniel, when under the Fig-Tree: He sees and is now looking down from Heaven, his Dwelling-Place, upon us, to see how we behave in these Fields.—Brethren, I know nothing of the Thoughts and Intents of your Hearts, in coming hither; but JESUS CHRIST, he knows who come like new-born Babes, desirous to be fed with the sincere Milk of the Word. And he knows who came to hear what the Babler says, and to run away with part of a broken Sentence, that they may have whereof to accuse him.—This Expression then, *I know you not*, must not be understood literally; No, it implies a Knowledge of Approbation, as tho' CHRIST had said, You call me, LORD, LORD, but you have not done the Things that I have said; you desire me to open the Door, but how can you come in hither not having on a Wedding Garment? Alas, you are naked as you came into the World! Where is my outward Righteousness imputed to you? Where is my inherent Righteousness wrought in you? Where is my Divine Image stamped upon your Souls? How dare you call
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me LORD, LORD, when you have not received the Holy Ghost, whereby I seal all that are truly mine? *Verily, I know you not, depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

And now, he that hath Ears to hear, let him hear what manner of Persons these were, whom JESUS CHRIST dismissed with this Answer.—Remember, I entreat you, remember they are not sent away for being Fornicators, Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, or Prodigals. No, in all Probability, as I observed before, they were, touching the outward Observances of the Moral Law, blameless; — they were constant as to the Form of Religion; and if they did no Good, yet no one could say, they did any one any Harm. The only Thing for which they were condemned and eternally banished from the Presence of the LORD (for so much is implied in that Sentence, *I know you not*) was this, they had no Oil in their Lamps, no Principle of a true living Faith, and Holiness in their Hearts.—And if Persons may go to Church, receive the Sacrament, lead honest moral Lives, and yet be sent to Hell at the Last Day, as they certainly will be if they advance no further, Where wilt thou, O Drunkard? Where wilt thou, O Swearer? Where wilt thou, O Sabbath-breaker? Where wilt thou that deniest Divine Revelation, and even the Form of Godliness? Where wilt thou, and such like Sinners, appear? I know very well where.—You must appear before the dreadful Tribunal of JESUS CHRIST: For however you may, like *Felix*, put off the Prosecution of your Convictions, yet you, as well as others, must arise after Death, and appear in Judgment: You will then find, to your
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eternal Sorrow, what I just hinted at in the Beginning of this Discourse, viz. that your Damnation slumbereth not: Sin has blinded your Hearts, and harden'd your Foreheads now, but yet a little while, and our LORD will ease him of his Adversaries. — Methinks already, by Faith, I see the Heavens open'd, and the Holy JESUS coming, with his Face brighter than Ten Thousand Suns, darting Fury upon you from his Eyes! — Methinks I see you rising from your Graves, trembling and astonished, and crying out, Who can abide this Day of his coming!

And now what Inference shall I draw from what has been delivered? Our LORD, in the Words of the Text, has drawn one for me; *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

Watch; that is, be upon your Guard, and keep your Graces in continual Exercise: For as when we are commanded to watch unto Prayer, it signifies that we should continue instant in that Duty; so when we are required to watch in general, it means that we should put on the whole Armour of GOD, and live every Day as tho' it was our last. And Oh! that the LORD may now enable me to lift up my Voice like a Trumpet! For had I a thousand Tongues, or could I speak so loud that the whole World might hear me, I could not sound a more useful Alarm than that which is contained in the Words of the Text. *Watch therefore, my Brethren, I beseech you by the Mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, Watch; be upon your Guard; Awake, ye that sleep in the Dust: For ye know neither the Day nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.* Perhaps to Day, perhaps this Midnight, the

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CRY may be made : For in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, the Trump is to sound.— However, supposing the final Day of Judgment may yet be a great way off, yet the Day of Death is certainly near at Hand : For what is our Life ? It is but a Vapour, it is but a Span long, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. Blessed be God, we are all here well ; but who, out of this great Multitude, dares say, I shall go home to my House in Safety ? Who knows but whilst I am speaking, God may commission his ministering Spirits immediately to call some of you away by a sudden Stroke, to give an Account with what Attention you have heard this Sermon. You know, my Brethren, some such Instances we have lately had given us — And what Angel or Spirit hath assured us, that some of you shall not be the next ? *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man will come.*—And it is chiefly for this Reason, that God has hid the Day of our Deaths from us.— For since I know not but I may die to Morrow, why, O my Soul, may each of us say, wilt thou not watch to Day ? Since I know not but I may die the next Moment, why wilt thou not prepare for dying this ? — Many such Reflections as these, my Brethren, croud in upon my Mind. At present, blessed be the LORD, who delights to magnify his Strength in a poor Worm's Weakness, I am at a Stand, not so much about what I shall say, as what I shall leave unsaid. — My Belly, like *Elibu's*, is, as it were, full of new Wines — out of the Abundance of my Heart my Mouth speaketh. The seeing so great a Multitude standing before me, a Sense of the infinite Majesty of that God in whose Name I preach, and before whom

whom I as well as you must appear, to give an Account; and the Uncertainty there is whether I shall live another Day, to speak to you any more—These Considerations, I say, especially the Presence of God, which I now feel upon my Soul, furnishes me with so much Matter, that I scarce know where to begin, or where to end my Application.—However, for Method-sake, by the Divine Assistance, I will branch it into three several Particulars.

And first, I would remind you that are notoriously ungodly, of what our LORD says in the Text: For though I have said that your Damnation slumbereth not, whilst you continue in an impenitent State; yet that was only to set you upon your Watch, to convince you of your Danger, and excite you to cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?* I appeal to all that hear me, whether I have said, the Door of Mercy should be shut against you, if you believe on JESUS CHRIST: No, if you are the chief of Sinners; if you are Murderers of Fathers, Murderers of Mothers; if you are emphatically the Dung and Offscouring of all Things; yet if you believe on JESUS CHRIST, and cry unto him with the same Faith as the expiring Thief, *LORD remember me, now thou art in thy Kingdom*; I will pawn my eternal Salvation upon it, if he does not shortly translate you to this heavenly Paradise. Wonder not at my speaking with so much Assurance: For I know this is a faithful and true Saying, and worthy all Acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the World to save all truly affected and believing Sinners: Nay, so great is his Love, that I am persuaded, was it necessary, he would come again into the World, and die a second
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Time for them on the Cross. But, blessed be GOD, when our LORD bowed down his Head, and gave up the Ghost, our Redemption was finished. It's not our Sins, but our want of a lively Faith in his Blood, that will prove our Condemnation: If you draw near to him by Faith, tho' ye are the worst of Sinners, yet he will not say unto you, *Verily I know you not*—No, a Door of Mercy shall be opened to you. Look then, look then, by an Eye of Faith, to that GOD-MAN whom ye have pierced.—Behold him bleeding, panting, dying upon the Cross, with Arms stretched out ready to embrace you all.—Hark! how he groans! See how all Nature is in an Agony! The Rocks rend, the Graves open; the Sun withdraws its Light, ashamed as it were to see the GOD OF NATURE suffer; and all this to usher in Man's great Redemption.—Nay, the HOLY JESUS, in the very Agonies and Pangs of Death, prays for his very Murderers; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* What then, if you have crucified the SON OF GOD afresh, and put him to an open Shame, yet do not despair, only believe, and even this shall be forgiven. You have read, at least you have heard, no doubt, how three Thousand were converted at St. Peter's preaching one single Sermon, after our LORD's Ascension into Heaven; and many of the Crucifiers of the LORD OF GLORY undoubtedly were amongst them, and why should you despair? For JESUS CHRIST is the same, Yesterday, to Day, and forever. The Holy Ghost shall be sent down on you, as well as on them; if you do but believe; for CHRIST ascended up on High to receive this Gift, even for the vilest of Men.—Come then, *All ye that are*

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wearry and heavy laden with the Sense of your Sins, lay hold on CHRIST by Faith, and he will give you Rest; for Salvation is the free Gift of God to all them that believe. And tho' you may think this too good News to be true, yet I speak the Truth in CHRIST, I lie not, this is the Gospel, this is the glad Tidings which we are commissioned to preach to every Creature. Be not faithless then, but believing. Let not the Devil lead you captive at his Will any longer; for all the Wages he gives his Servants is Death, Death often in this Life, Death everlasting in the next: But now the free Gift of God is eternal Life to all that believe in JESUS CHRIST.—*Pharisees* are and will be offended at my coming here, and offering you Salvation on such cheap Terms—but the more they bid me hold my Peace, the more will I cry out and proclaim to convicted Sinners JESUS, *David's* Son according to the Flesh, but *David's* Lord as he was God, will have Mercy upon all that by a living Faith truly turn to him.—If this is to be vile, I pray God I may be more vile.—If they will not let me preach CHRIST crucified, and offer Salvation to poor Sinners in a Church, I will preach him in the Lanes, Streets, Highways and Hedges, and nothing pleases me better than to think I am now in one of the Devils strongest Holds.—Surely the LORD has not sent me and all you hither for nothing; no, blessed be God, the Fields are white ready unto Harvest, and many Souls I hope will be gathered into his heavenly Garner.—It's true, it's the Midnight of the Church, especially the poor Church of *England*; but God has lately sent forth his Servants to cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*: I beseech you, Oh Sinners, heark-

en unto the Voice! Let me espouse you by Faith to my dear Master; and henceforward **WATCH AND PRAY**, that you may be ready to go forth to meet him.

Secondly, I would apply myself to those amongst you that are not openly profane, but by depending on a formal Round of Duties, deceive your own Souls, and are only foolish Virgins.—But I must speak to your Conviction rather than your Comfort. My dear Brethren, do not deceive your own Souls.—You have heard how far the foolish Virgins went, and yet were answered with a *Verity I know you not*: The Reason is, because none but such that have a living Faith in **JESUS CHRIST**, and are truly born again, can possibly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. You may, perhaps, live honest and outwardly moral Lives, but if you depend on that Morality, or join your Works with your Faith, in order to justify you before **GOD**, you have no Lot or Share in **CHRIST**'s Redemption: For what is this but to deny the **LORD** that has bought you? What is this but making yourselves your own Saviours?—taking the Crown from **JESUS CHRIST**, and putting it on your own Heads? The Crime of the Devil, some have supposed, consisted in this, that he would not bow to **JESUS CHRIST**, when the Father commanded all the Angels to worship him; and what do you less? You will not own and submit to his Righteousness; and tho' you pretend to worship him with your Lips, yet your Hearts are far from him; besides, you, in Effect, deny the Operations of his blessed Spirit, you mistake common for effectual Grace; you hope to be saved, because you have good Desires, and a few short Convictions; and what is this, but

to give GOD, his Word, and all his Saints the Lie? A Jew, a Turk, has equally as good Grounds whereon to build his Hopes of Salvation. Need I not then to cry out to you, Ye foolish Virgins, *Watch*; beg of GOD to convince you of your Self-Righteousness, and the secret Unbelief of your Hearts; or otherwise, whensoever the CRY shall be made, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*, you will find yourselves utterly unprepared to go forth to meet him:— You may cry *LORD, LORD*; but the Answer will be, *Verily, I know you not.*

Thirdly, I would speak a Word or two by Way of Exhortation to those who are wise Virgins, and are assured that they have on a Wedding-Garment. That there are many such amongst you, who by Grace have renounced your own Righteousness, and know that the Righteousness of the Lord JESUS is imputed to you, I make no doubt. GOD has his secret Ones in the worst of Times; and I am persuaded he has not let so loud a Gospel Cry to be made amongst his People, as of late has been heard, for nothing: No, I am confident, the Holy Ghost has been given to many at the Preaching of Faith, and has powerfully fallen upon many, whilst they have been hearing the Word: You are now then no longer foolish, but wise Virgins; notwithstanding, I beseech you also to suffer the Word of Exhortation; for wise Virgins are too apt, whilst the Bridegroom tarries, to slumber and sleep. *Watch* therefore, my dear Brethren, watch and pray, at this Time especially; for perhaps a Time of Suffering is at Hand.— The Ark of the LORD begins already to be driven into the Wilderness.— Be ye therefore upon your Watch, and still perse-

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severe in following your LORD, even without the Camp, bearing his Reproach: The Cry that has been lately made, has awakened the Devil and his Servants; they begin to rage horribly; and well they may; for I hope their Kingdom is in Danger. *Watch* therefore, my dear Brethren, for if we are not always upon our Guard, a Time of Trial may overtake us unawares; and, instead of owning, like *Peter*, we may be tempted to deny our Master. Set Death and Eternity often before you. Look unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of your Faith, and consider how little a while it will be, e'er he comes to Judgment; and then our Reproach shall be wiped away; the Accusers of us and our Brethren shall be cast down, and we all shall be shut in Heaven for ever, with our dear LORD JESUS.

Lastly; what I say unto you, I say unto all, *WATCH*: High and Low, Rich and Poor, Young and Old, one with another, I beseech you, by the Mercies of JESUS, whom I am now preaching, be upon your Guard: Fly, fly to JESUS CHRIST, that Heavenly Bridegroom: *Behold* he desires to take you to himself, miserable, poor, blind and naked as you are; he is willing to cloath you with his everlasting Righteousness, and make you Partakers of that Glory, which he enjoyed with the Father before the World began. Oh! do not turn a deaf Ear to me; do not reject the Message on Account of the Meanness of the Messenger. I am a Child; a Youth of uncircumcised Lips; but the LORD has chosen me, that the Glory might be all his own. — Had he sent to invite you by a learned *Rabbi*, you might have been tempted to think the Man had done something; but now GOD has

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sent a Child that cannot speak, that the Excellency of the Power may be seen not to be of Man, but of GOD. Let the learned *Pharisees* then despise my Youth. I care not how vile I appear in the Sight of such Men: I glory in it. And I am persuaded, if any of you should be married to CHRIST by this Preaching, you will have no Reason to repent, when you come to Heaven, that GOD sent a Child to cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh!* Oh! my Brethren, the Thought of being instrumental in bringing one of you to Glory, fills me with fresh Zeal. My Brethren, once more I entreat you, *WATCH, WATCH AND PRAY:* For the LORD JESUS will receive all that call upon him faithfully. Let that CRY, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh,* be continually sounding in your ears; and begin now to live, as though you were assured, this Night you were to go forth to meet him. I could say more, but the other Business and Duties of the Day oblige me to stop. May the LORD give you all an hearing Ear, and obedient Heart, and so closely unite you to himself by one Spirit, that when he shall come in terrible Majesty, to judge Mankind, you may be found having on a Wedding Garment, and ready to go in with him to the Marriage.

Grant this, O LORD, for thy dear SON'S Sake.

SERMON XIX.

What think ye of CHRIST?

MATTH. xxii. 42.

What think ye of CHRIST?

WHEN it pleased the Eternal Son of God to tabernacle among us, and come preaching the glad Tidings of Salvation to a fallen World, different Opinions were entertained by different Parties concerning him.—As to his Person, some said he was *Moses*; others that he was *Elias*; *Jeremias*, or one of the ancient Prophets; few acknowledged him to be what he really was, God blessed for evermore.—And as to his Doctrine, tho' the common People, being free from Prejudice, were persuaded of the heavenly Tendency of his going about to do Good, for the Generality, heard him gladly, and said he was a good Man; yet the envious, worldly-minded, self-righteous Governors and Teachers of the Jewish Church, being grieved at his Success, on the one Hand, and unable (having never been taught of God) to understand the Purity of his Doctrine, on the other; notwithstanding our Lord spake as never Man spake, and did such

Miracles which no Man could possibly do, unless GOD was with him; yet they not only were so insatuated, as to say, that he deceived the People, but also were so blasphemous as to affirm, that he was in League with the Devil himself; and cast out Devils by *Beelzebub* the Prince of Devils.—Nay, our LORD's own Brethren and Kinsmen, according to the Flesh, were so blinded by Prejudice and Unbelief, that on a certain Day, when he went out to teach the Multitudes in the Fields, they sent to take hold on him, urging this as a Reason for their Conduct, viz. *That he was besides himself.*

Thus was the King and Lord of Glory judged by Man's Judgment, when made manifest in the Flesh: Far be it from any of his Ministers to expect any better Treatment.—No, if we come in the Spirit and Power of our Master, in this, as in every other Part of his Sufferings, we must follow his Steps.—The like Reproaches which were cast on him, will be thrown on us also.—Those that received our Lord and his Doctrine, will receive and hear us for his Name-sake.—The Poor, blessed be GOD, as our present Meeting abundantly testifies, receive the Gospel, and the common People hear us gladly; whilst those that are sitting in *Moses* his Chair, and love to wear long Robes, being ignorant of the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith in CHRIST JESUS, and having never felt the Power of GOD upon their Hearts, will be continually crying out against us, as Mad-men, Deceivers of the People, and as acting under the Influences of evil Spirits.

But he is unworthy the Name of a Minister of the Gospel of Peace, who is unwilling, not only to have his Name cast out as evil, but also to die

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for the Truths of the Lord JESUS. — It is the Character of *Hirelings* and *False Prophets*, who care not for the Sheep, to have all Men speak well of them. — *Blessed are you*, says our LORD to his first Apostles, and in them to all succeeding Ministers, *when Men speak all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Name-sake*. — And indeed it is impossible but such Offences must come: For Men will always judge of others according to the Principles from which they act themselves. And if they care not to yield Obedience to the Doctrines which we deliver, they must necessarily, in Self-Defence, speak against the Preachers, lest they should be asked that Question, which the *Pharisees* of old feared to have retorted on them, if they confessed that *John* was a Prophet, viz. *Why then did you not believe on him?* In all such Cases, we have nothing to do but to search our own Hearts, and if we can assure our Consciences, before GOD, that we act with a single Eye to his Glory, we are chearfully to go on in our Work, and not in the least to regard what Men or Devils can say against, or do unto us.

But to return. You have heard what various Thoughts were handed about concerning JESUS CHRIST whilst here on Earth: Nor is he otherwise treated, even now he is exalted to sit down at the Right Hand of his Father in Heaven. — A Stranger to Christianity, was he to hear we all profess to hold one LORD, would naturally infer, that we all thought and spoke one and the same Thing about him. But alas! to our Shame be it mentioned, tho' CHRIST be not divided in himself, yet Professors are sadly divided in their Thoughts about him; and that not only as to the Circumstances of his Religion, but also of

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those essential Truths which must necessarily be believed and received by us, if ever we hope to be Heirs of eternal Salvation.

Some, and that I fear a Multitude which no Man can easily number, there are amongst us, who call themselves Christians, and yet seldom or never seriously think of JESUS CHRIST at all. They can think of their Shops, and their Farms, their Plays, their Balls, their Assemblies, and Horse-Races (Entertainments which directly tend to exclude Religion out of the World) but as for CHRIST, the Author and Finisher of Faith, the LORD who has bought poor Sinners with his precious Blood, and who is the only Thing worth thinking of, alas! he is not in all, at most in very few of their Thoughts. But believe me, O ye earthly, sensual, carnally-minded Professors, however little you may think of CHRIST now, or however industriously you may strive to keep him out of your Thoughts, by pursuing the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life, yet there is a Time coming, when you will wish you had thought of CHRIST more, and of your Profits and Pleasures less.—For the Gay, the Polite, the Rich also must die as well as others, and leave their Poms, their Vanities, and all their Wealth behind them.—And oh! what Thoughts will you entertain concerning JESUS CHRIST, in that Hour!

But I must not pursue these Reflections: They would carry me too far from the main Design of this Discourse, which is to shew what those that are truly desirous to know how to worship GOD in Spirit and in Truth, ought to think concerning JESUS CHRIST, whom GOD hath sent to be the

the End of the Law for Righteousness to all them that shall believe.

I trust, *my Brethren*, you are more noble than to think me too strict or scrupulous, in thus attempting to regulate even your Thoughts about JESUS CHRIST: For by our Thoughts, as well as our Words and Actions, are we to be judged at the Great Day. And in vain do we hope to believe in, or worship CHRIST aright, unless our Principles, on which our Faith and Practice is founded, are agreeable to the Form of sound Words deliver'd to us in the Scriptures of Truth.

Besides, many Deceivers are gone abroad into the World. Mere *Heathen Morality*, and not JESUS CHRIST, is preached in most of our Churches. And how should People think rightly of CHRIST, of whom they have scarcely heard? Do bear with me a little then, whilst, to inform your Consciences, I ask you a few Questions concerning JESUS CHRIST: For there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby we can be saved, but his.

And *First*, *What think you about the Person of CHRIST? Whose Son is he?* This is the Question our LORD puts to the *Pharisees* in the Words following the Text; and never was it more necessary to repeat this Question than in these last Days. For Numbers that are called after the Name of CHRIST, and I fear, many that pretend to preach him, are so far advanced in the blasphemous Chair, as openly to deny his being really, truly, and properly GOD. But no one that ever was Partaker of his Spirit, will speak thus lightly of him. No; if they are asked, as *Peter* and his Brethren were, *But whom say ye that I am?* they will reply without Hesitation,

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Thou art CHRIST the Son of the ever-living GOD. For the Confession of our LORD's Divinity, is the Rock upon which he builds his Church. Was it possible to take this away, the Gates of Hell would quickly prevail against it. — *My Brethren,* if JESUS CHRIST be not very GOD of very GOD, I would never preach the Gospel of CHRIST again. For it would not be Gospel; it would be only a System of moral Ethicks: *Seneca, Cicero,* or any of the *Gentile Philosophers,* would be as good a Saviour as JESUS of Nazareth. It is the Divinity of our LORD that gives a Sanction to his Death, and makes him such a High-Priest as became us, *viz.* One who by the infinite Merits of his Suffering could make a full, perfect, sufficient Sacrifice, Satisfaction and Oblation to an infinitely offended Justice. And whatsoever Minister of the *Church of England,* makes use of her Forms, and eats of her Bread, and yet holds not this Doctrine (as I fear too many such are crept in amongst us) such a one belongs only to the *Synagogue of Satan.* — He is not a Child or Minister of GOD: No; he is a Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing; he is a Child and Minister of that Wicked One the Devil.

Many will think these hard Sayings: But I think it no Breach of Charity to affirm, that an *Arian* or *Socinian* cannot be a Christian. — The one would make us believe JESUS CHRIST is only a *Created God,* which is a Self-Contradiction: And the other would have us look on him only as a *Good Man;* and instead of owning his Death to be an Attonement for the Sins of the World, would persuade us, that CHRIST died only to seal the Truth of his Doctrine with his Blood. But if JESUS CHRIST be no more than a mere Man, if
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he be not truly GOD, he was the vilest Sinner that ever appeared in the World.—For he accepted of Divine Adoration from the Man who had been born blind, as we read *John ix. 38.* *And he said, LORD I believe, and worshipped him.* Besides, if CHRIST be not properly GOD, our Faith is vain, we are yet in our Sins:—For no created Being, tho' of the highest Order, could possibly merit any thing at GOD's Hands: No, it was our LORD's Divinity, that alone qualified him to take away the Sins of the World; and therefore we hear St. *John* pronouncing so positively, that *the Word, i. e. JESUS CHRIST, was not only with GOD, but was GOD.*—For the like Reason, St. *Paul* says, that *he was in the Form of GOD.*—*That in him dwelt all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily.*—Nay, JESUS CHRIST himself assumes the Title which GOD gave to himself, when he sent *Moses* to deliver his People *Israel.* *Before Abraham was,* says he, *I am.*—And again, *I and my Father are one.* Which last Words, tho' our modern Infidels would evade and wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own Damnation; yet it is evident, that the *Jews* understood our LORD, when he spake thus, as tho' he made himself equal with GOD; otherwise, why did they stone him as a Blasphemer?—And now, why should it be thought a Breach of Charity, to affirm, that those that deny the Divinity of JESUS CHRIST, in the strictest Sense of the Word, cannot be Christians? For they are greater Infidels than the Devils themselves.—They confessed that they knew who he was, *even the Holy One of GOD.*—They not only believe, but which is more than the Unbelievers of this Generation do, they tremble.—And was it possible

ſible for *Arius* or *Socinus*, thoſe Arch-Hereticks, to be releaſed from their Chains of Darkneſs, under which (unleſs they altered their Principles before they died) they are now reſerved to the Judgment of the Great Day, I am perſuaded they would inform us, how Hell had convinced them of the Divinity of JESUS CHRIST, and that they would adviſe their Followers to abhor their Principles, leſt they ſhould come into the ſame Place, and thereby increaſe each others Torments.

But, *Secondly, What think you of the Manhood or Incarnation of JESUS CHRIST?* For CHRIST was not only GOD, but he was GOD and Man in one Perſon. — Thus runs the Text and Context, — *When the Pharifees were gathered together, JESUS asked them, ſaying, What think ye of CHRIST? Whoſe Son is he?* They ſay unto him, *the Son of David.* — *How then,* ſays our Divine Maſter, *does David in Spirit call him LORD?* From which Paſſage it is evident, that we do not think rightly of the Perſon of JESUS CHRIST, unleſs we believe him to be perfect GOD and perfect Man, of a reaſonable Soul and human Fleſh ſubſiſting.

For it is on this Account that he is called CHRIST, or the *anointed*, i. e. one who thro' his own voluntary Offer was ſet apart by the Father, and ſtrengthen'd and qualified by the Anointing or Communication of the Holy Ghoſt, to be a Mediator between Him and offending Man.

The Reason or firſt Cauſe why the Son of GOD took upon him our Nature, was, the Fall of our firſt Parents. — I hope there is no one preſent ſo atheiſtical, as to think that Man made himſelf: No, it was GOD that made us, and not we ourſelves. — And I would willingly think, that

that no one would be so blasphemous as to suppose, that if GOD did make us, he made us such Creatures as we now find ourselves to be. For this would be giving GOD's Word the Lie, which tells us, that *in the Image of GOD*, not in the Image which we now bear on our Souls, *made he Man*.—Far be it from us to think thus: For as GOD made Man, so GOD made him perfect. He placed him in the Garden of *Eden*, and condescended to enter into a Covenant with him, promising him eternal Life, upon Condition of an unfinning Obedience; and threatening eternal Death, if he broke his Law, and eat the forbidden Fruit.

Man did eat; and herein acting as our Representative, thereby involved both himself and us in that Curse, which GOD, the righteous Judge, had said should be the Consequence of his Disobedience.—But here begins that Mystery of Godliness, GOD manifested in the Flesh. For (sing, O Heavens, and rejoice, O Earth!) the eternal Father, foreseeing how *Satan* would bruise the Heel of Man, had in his eternal Counsel, provided a Means whereby he might bruise that accursed Serpent's Head. Man is permitted to fall, and become subject to Death; but JESUS the only begotten Son of GOD, begotten of the Father before all Worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, offers to die to make an Attonement for his Transgression, and to fulfil all Righteousness in his Stead. And because it was impossible for him to do this as he was GOD, and yet since Man had offended, it was necessary it should be done in the Person of Man, rather than we should perish; this *Everlasting GOD*, this *Prince of Peace*, this *Antient*

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of Days, in the Fulness of Time, had a Body prepared for him by the Holy Ghost, and became an Infant of a Span long.—In this Body he performed a compleat Obedience to the Law of GOD, whereby he, in our stead, fulfilled the Covenant of Works, and at last became subject to Death, even the Death upon the Cross; that as GOD he might satisfy, as Man he might obey and suffer; and being GOD and Man in one Person, might once more procure a Union between GOD and our Souls.

And now, What think you of this Love of CHRIST? Do not you think it was wondrous great? Especially when you consider that we were CHRIST's bitter Enemies, and that he would have been infinitely happy in himself, notwithstanding we had perished for ever.—Whatever you may think of it, I know the blessed Angels, who are not so much concerned in this Mystery of Godliness as we, think most highly of it.—They do, they will desire to look into and admire it, thro' all Eternity.—Why, Oh why, ye Sinners, will you not think of this Love of CHRIST?—Surely it must melt down the most harden'd Heart.—Whilst I am speaking, the Thoughts of this infinite and condescending Love, fires and warms my Soul.—I could dwell on it forever.—But it is expedient for you, that I should ask you another Question concerning JESUS CHRIST.

Thirdly, What think you about being justified by CHRIST?—I believe I can answer for some of you.—For many, I fear, think to be justified or looked upon as righteous in GOD's Sight, without JESUS CHRIST.—But such will find themselves dreadfully mistaken: For out of CHRIST

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GOD is a consuming Fire.—Others satisfy themselves with believing that *CHRIST* was *GOD* and *Man*, and that he came into the World to save Sinners in general. Whereas their chief Thoughts ought to be, how they may be assured that *JESUS CHRIST* came into the World to save them in particular.—*The Life that I now live in the Flesh*, says the Apostle, *is by Faith of the Son of GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me.*—Observe, *for me.* For it is this immediate Application of *JESUS CHRIST* to our own Hearts, that renders his Merits effectual to our eternal Salvation.—An unapplied *CHRIST* will do us no Service at all.—Others there are that go still further: For they think that *JESUS CHRIST* is *GOD-MAN*, that he is to be applied to their Hearts, and that they can be justified in *GOD'S* Sight only in or thro' him; but then they make him only in Part a Saviour.—They are for doing what they can themselves, and then *JESUS CHRIST* is to make up the Deficiencies of their Righteousness. This is the Sum and Substance of our modern Divinity. And was it possible for me to know the Thoughts of most that hear me this Day, I believe they would tell me, this was the Scheme they had laid, and perhaps depended on for some Years, for their eternal Salvation. Is it not then high Time, *my Brethren*, for you to entertain quite different Thoughts concerning Justification by *JESUS CHRIST*? For if you think thus, you are in the Case of those unhappy *Jews*, who went about establishing their own Righteousness, and would not submit to, and consequently missed of that Righteousness which is of *GOD*, by Faith in *CHRIST JESUS* our *LORD*. What think you then, *my Brethren*, if I tell you, that you are to
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be justified freely thro' Faith in JESUS CHRIST, without any Regard to any Work, or Fitness, foreseen in us, at all? For Salvation is the free Gift of GOD. I know no Fitness in Man, but a Fitness to be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone forever. Our Righteousnesses in GOD's Sight are but as filthy Rags. He cannot away with them.—Our Holiness, if we have any, is not the Cause, but the Effect of our Justification in GOD's Sight.—We love GOD, because he first loved us. We must not come to GOD as the proud *Pharisee* did, bringing in as it were a Reckoning of our Services. We must come in the Temper and Language of the poor *Publican*, smiting upon our Breasts, and saying, GOD be merciful to me a Sinner. For JESUS CHRIST justifies us whilst we are ungodly.—He came not to call the Righteous, but the Sinners to Repentance. The poor in Spirit, they who are willing to go out of themselves, and rely wholly on the Righteousness of another, are only so blessed as to be Members of his Kingdom. The Righteousness, the whole Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, is to be imputed to us, instead of our own. For we are not under the Law, but under Grace. And as many as walk after this Rule, Peace be on them; for they, and they only are the true *Israel* of GOD. In the great Work of Man's Redemption, Boasting is intirely excluded; which could not be, if only one of our Works was to be joined with the Merits of CHRIST. Our Salvation is all of GOD from the Beginning to the End. It is not of Works; lest any Man should boast. Man has no hand in it. It is CHRIST who is to be made to us of GOD the Father, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and

and eternal Redemption. — His active as well as his passive Obedience, is to be applied to poor Sinners: He has fulfilled all Righteousness in our stead, that we might become the Righteousness of GOD in him. — All we have to do, is to lay hold on this Righteousness by Faith: And that very Moment we do apprehend it by a lively Faith, that very Moment we may be assured that the Blood of JESUS CHRIST has cleansed us from all Sin. — For the Promise is to us and to our Children, and to as many as the LORD our GOD shall call. If we and our whole Houses believe, we shall be saved as well as the Jaylor and his House: For the Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST is an everlasting as well as a perfect Righteousness. — It is as effectual to all them that believe in him now, as formerly; and so it will be, till Time shall be no more. Search the Scriptures, as the *Bereans* did, and see whether these Things are not so. Search *St. Paul's* Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, and there you will find this Doctrine so plainly taught you, that unless you have Eyes and see not, he that runs may read. Search the Eleventh Article of our Church, "We are accounted righteous before GOD, only for the Merits of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST by Faith, and not for our own Works or Deservings."

This Doctrine of our free Justification by Faith in CHRIST JESUS, however censured and evil spoken of by our present Masters of *Israel*, was highly esteem'd by our wise Fore-fathers: For in the subsequent Words of the forementioned Article, it is called a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of Comfort; and so it is to all that

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are weary and heavy laden, and are truly willing to find Rest in JESUS CHRIST.

This is Gospel, this is glad Tidings, of great Joy to all that feel themselves poor, lost and undone damned Sinners. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come unto the Waters of Life, and drink freely; come and buy without Money, and without Price.* — Behold a Fountain opened in your Saviour's Side, for Sin and for all Uncleanness. Look unto him whom you have pierced. Look unto him by Faith, and verily you shall be saved, tho' you came here only to ridicule and blaspheme, and never thought of GOD or of CHRIST before.

Not that you must think GOD will save you because, or on Account of your Faith: For Faith is a Work, and then you would be justified for your Works. But when I tell you, we are to be justified by Faith, I mean that Faith is the Instrument whereby the Sinner applies or brings home the Redemption of JESUS CHRIST to his Heart. And to whomsoever GOD gives such a Faith (for it is the free Gift of GOD) he may lift up his Head with Boldness, he need not fear, he is a spiritual Son of our spiritual David, he has passed from Death to Life, he shall never come into Condemnation. — This is the Gospel which we preach. If any Man or Angel preach any other Gospel, than this of our being freely justified thro' Faith in CHRIST JESUS, we have the Authority of the greatest Apostle to pronounce him accursed.

And now, my Brethren, What think you of this Foolishness of Preaching? To you that have tasted the good Word of Life, and been enlight-
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ned to see the Riches of God's free Grace in CHRIST JESUS, I am persuaded it is precious, and has distilled like the Dew into your Souls.— And Oh! that all were like minded! — But I am afraid Numbers are ready to go away contradicting and blaspheming. Tell me, are there not many of you saying within yourselves, “ This is “ a licentious Doctrine ; this Preacher is opening “ a Door for Encouragement in Sin.” But this does not surprize me at all, it is a stale antiquated Objection, as old as the Doctrine of Justification itself ; and (which by the Way is not much to the Credit of those who urge it now) it was made by an Infidel. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, after he had, in the first five Chapters, demonstrably proved the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone ; in the sixth, brings in an Unbeliever saying, *shall we continue in Sin then that Grace may abound ?* But as he rejected such an Inference with a *God forbid*, so do I : For the Faith which we preach is not a dead speculative Faith, *an assenting to Things credible as credible*, as it is commonly defined. It is not a Faith of the Head only ; but a Faith of the Heart. It is a living Principle wrought in the Soul, by the Spirit of the Ever-living God, convincing the Sinner of his lost, undone Condition by Nature, enabling him to apply and lay hold on the perfect Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST freely offer'd him in the Gospel, and continually exciting him, out of a Principle of Love and Gratitude, to shew forth that Faith by abounding in every good Word and Work.— This is the Sum and Substance of the Doctrine that has been delivered.— And if this be a licentious Doctrine, judge ye.— No, *my Brethren*, this is not destroying,

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ing, but teaching you how to do good Works, from a proper Principle.—For to use the Words of our Church in another of her Articles, “Works done before the Grace of CHRIST, and the Inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to GOD, forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in JESUS CHRIST—rather for that they are not done as GOD has willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin.” So that they who bid you do, and then live, are just as wise as those who would persuade you to build a beautiful magnificent House, without laying a Foundation.

It's true, the Doctrine of our free Justification by Faith in CHRIST JESUS, like other Gospel Truths, may and will be abused by Men of corrupt Minds, Reprobates concerning the Faith: But they who receive the Truth of GOD in the Love of it, will always be shewing their Faith by their Works. For this Reason, St. Paul, after he had been telling the *Ephesians*, *That by Grace they were saved thro' Faith, not of Works, lest any Man should boast*, immediately adds, *For we are his Workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good Works*. And in his Epistle to *Titus*, having given him Directions, *Ch. iii. ver. 7.* to tell People they were justified by Grace, directly subjoins, *ver. 8. I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good Works*. Agreeable to this we are told in our twelfth Article, “That albeit good Works, which are the Fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our Sins, and endure the Severity of GOD's Judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to GOD in CHRIST; and do spring
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“ necessarily out of a true and lively Faith, in-
“ somuch that a lively Faith may be as evidently
“ known by them, as a Tree discerned by the
“ Fruit.”

Oh what would I give, that this Article was duly understood and preached by all that have subscribed to it! The Ark of the Lord would not then be driven into the Wilderness, nor so many dissent from the *Church of England*.—For I am fully persuaded, that it's not so much on account of Rites and Ceremonies, as our not Preaching the Truth as it is in JESUS, that so many have been obliged to go and seek for Food elsewhere. Did not we fall from our established Doctrines, few, comparatively speaking, would fall from the Establish'd Church. Where CHRIST is preached, tho' it be in a Church or Common, Dissenters of all Denominations have and do most freely come. But if our Clergy will preach only the Law, and not shew the Way of Salvation by Faith in CHRIST JESUS, the Charge of Schism at the Day of Judgment, I fear, will chiefly lie at their Door. The true Sheep of CHRIST know the Voice of CHRIST's true Shepherds, *Strangers they will not hear.*

Observe, my dear Brethren, the Words of the Article, *good Works are the Fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification.* How then can they precede or be any ways the Cause of it? No; our Persons must be justified before our Performances can be accepted. God had respect to *Abel* before he had respect to his Offering: And therefore the Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST must be freely imputed to, and apprehended by us thro' Faith, before we can offer an acceptable Sacrifice to God: For out of CHRIST, as I hinted before,

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fore, GOD is a consuming Fire; and whatsoever is not of Faith in CHRIST, is Sin.

People's mistaking the Doctrine of free Justification, I believe, is partly owing to their not rightly considering the different Persons St. Paul and St. James wrote to in their Epistles, as also the different Kind of Justification each of them writes about: The former asserts in Line upon Line, Argument upon Argument, *that we are justified by Faith alone.*—The latter put this Question, *Was not Abraham justified by Works?* From whence many, not considering the different Views of these holy Men, and the different Persons they wrote to, have blended and joined Faith and Works, in order to justify us in the Sight of GOD. But this is a Mistake all over; For St. Paul was writing to the Jewish Profelites, who sought Righteousness by the Works, not of the Ceremonial only, but of the Moral Law.—In Contradistinction to that, he tells them they were to look for Justification in GOD's Sight, only by the perfect Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST apprehended by Faith.—St. James had a different Set of People to deal with, viz. such who abused the Doctrines of free Justification, and thought they should be saved (as Numbers among us do now) upon their barely professing to believe on JESUS CHRIST.—These the holy Apostle endeavours wisely to convince, that such a Faith was only a dead and false Faith, and therefore it behoved all who would be blessed with faithful Abraham, to shew forth their Faith by their Works, as he did:—*For was not Abraham justified by Works,* says he? *i. e.* Did he not prove that his Faith was a true justifying Faith, by its being productive of good Works? From whence it is plain,

plain, that St. *James* is talking of a declarative Justification before Men; shew me, demonstrate, evidence to me, that thou hast a true Faith, by thy Works. Whereas St. *Paul* is talking only of our being justified in the Sight of GOD; and thus he proves that *Abraham*, as we also are to be, was justified before ever the Moral or Ceremonial Law was given to the *Jews*: For it is written, *Abraham believed in the LORD, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness.*

Take the Substance of what has been said on this Head, in the few following Words.—Every Man that is saved, is justified three Ways. *First*, meritoriously, *i. e.* by the Death of JESUS CHRIST: It is the Blood of JESUS CHRIST alone that cleanses us from all Sin. *Secondly*, instrumentally, *viz.* By Faith; Faith is the Means or Instrument whereby the Merits of JESUS CHRIST are applied to the Sinner's Heart: *Ye are all the Children of GOD by Faith in CHRIST JESUS.* *Thirdly*, we are justified declaratively; namely, by good Works, *i. e.* good Works declare and prove to the World, that our Faith is a true saving Faith.—*Was not Abraham justified by Works?* And again, *Shew me thy Faith by thy Works?*—

It may not be improper to illustrate this Doctrine by an Example or two. I suppose no one will pretend to say, that there was any Fitness for Salvation in *Zacheus* the Publican, when he came to see JESUS out of no better Principle, than that whereby perhaps Thousands are led to hear me preach, I mean Curiosity; but JESUS CHRIST prevented and called him by his Free Grace, and sweetly, but irresistibly inclined him to obey that Call, as I pray GOD he may influ-

ence all you that come only to see who the Preacher is, *Zacheus* received our Lord joyfully into his House, and at the same Time by Faith received him into his Heart. *Zacheus* was then freely justified in the Sight of God.—But behold the immediate Fruits of that Justification! He stands forth in the Midst, and as before he had believed in his Heart, he now makes Confession with his Mouth to Salvation.—*Behold, LORD, the Half of my Goods I give unto the Poor; and if I have taken any Thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him Four-fold.*—And thus it will be with thee, O Believer, as soon as ever God's dear Son is revealed in thee by a living Faith, thou wilt have no Rest in thy Spirit, till out of Love and Gratitude for what God has done for thy Soul, thou shewest forth thy Faith by thy Works.

Again, I suppose every Body will grant there was no Fitness for Salvation in the Persecutor *Saul*, no more than there is in those persecuting Zealots of these last Days, who are already breathing out Threatnings, and, if in their Power, would breathe out Slaughter also, against the Disciples of the LORD.

Now our LORD, we know, freely prevented him by his Grace (and, O that he would thus effectually call the Persecutors of this Generation) and by a Light from Heaven struck him to the Ground.—At the same Time, by his Spirit, he pricked him to the Heart, convinced him of Sin, and caused him to cry out, *Who art thou, Lord?* CHRIST replies, *I am JESUS whom thou persecutest.* Faith then was instantaneously given him, and behold, immediately *Saul* cries out, LORD, *what wouldst thou have me to do?* And so will every

every poor Soul that believes on the Lord JESUS with his whole Heart. He will be always asking, *LORD, what shall I do for thee? LORD, what wouldst thou have me to do?* Not to justify himself, but only to evidence the Sincerity of his Love and Thankfulness to his all-merciful High-Priest, for plucking him as a Fire-brand out of the Fire.

Perhaps, many Self-righteous Persons amongst you, may flatter yourselves, that you are not so wicked as either *Zacheus* or *Saul* was, and consequently there is a greater Fitness for Salvation in you than in them. But if you think thus, indeed you think more highly of yourselves than you ought to think: For by Nature we are all alike, all equally fallen short of the Glory of GOD, all equally dead in Trespasses and Sins, and there needs the same Almighty Power to be exerted in converting any one of the most sober, good-natured Moral Persons here present, as there was in converting the Publican *Zacheus*, or that notorious Persecutor *Saul*. — And was it possible for you to ascend into the highest Heavens, and to enquire of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, I am persuaded they would tell you this Doctrine is from GOD. But we have a more sure Word of Prophecy, to which we would do well to give heed, as unto a Light shining in a dark Place. *My Brethren*, the Word is nigh you; search the Scriptures; beg of GOD to make you willing to be saved in this the Day of his Power. — For it is not Flesh and Blood, but the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, that alone can reveal these Things unto you.

Fourthly and lastly, What think you of JESUS CHRIST being formed within you? For whom

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CHRIST justifies, them he also sanctifies. Altho' he finds, yet he does not leave us unholy.—A true Christian may not so properly be said to live, as JESUS CHRIST to live in him. For they only that are led by the Spirit of CHRIST, who is GOD, are the true Sons of GOD.

As I observed before, so I tell you again, the Faith which we preach is not a dead, but a lively active Faith wrought in the Soul, and working a thorough Change, by the Power of the HOLY GHOST, in the whole Man—And unless CHRIST be thus in you, notwithstanding you may be orthodox as to the foregoing Principles, notwithstanding you may have good Desires, and attend constantly on the Means of Grace; yet, in St. Paul's Opinion, you are out of a State of Salvation. *Know you not*, says that Apostle to the *Corinthians*, a Church famous for its Gifts above any Church under Heaven, *that CHRIST is in you*, viz. by his Spirit, *unless you are Reprobates?*

For CHRIST came not only to save us from the Guilt, but the Power of our Sins: Till he has done this, however he may be a Saviour to others, we can have no Assurance, or well-grounded Hope, that he has saved us: For it is by receiving his Blessed Spirit into our Hearts, and feeling him witnessing with our Spirits, that we are the Sons of GOD, that we can be certified of our being sealed to the Day of Redemption.

This is a great Mystery, but I speak of CHRIST and the *New-Birth*.—Marvel not at my asking you, what you think about CHRIST being form'd within you? For either GOD must change his Nature, or we ours. For as in *Adam* we all have spiritually died, so all that are effectually saved by CHRIST, must in CHRIST be spiritual-ly

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ly made alive. His only End in dying and rising again, and interceding for us now in Heaven, is to redeem us from the Misery of our fallen Nature, and, by the Operation of his Blessed Spirit, to make us meet to be Partakers of the Heavenly Inheritance with the Saints in Light. None but those that thus are changed by his Grace here, shall appear with him in Glory hereafter.

Examine yourselves therefore, *my Brethren*, whether you are in the Faith; prove yourselves; and think it not sufficient to say in your Creed, *I believe in JESUS CHRIST*: For you do not believe, you are Liars, you are Reprobates, you are yet in a State of Death. You take God's Name in vain when you call him Father. Your Prayers are turned into Sin, unless you believe into CHRIST, so as to have your Life hid with him in God, and to receive Life and Nourishment from Him, as the Branches do from the Vine.

I know, indeed, the Men of this Generation deny there is any such Thing as Feeling CHRIST within them; but alas! to what a dreadful Condition would such reduce us, even to the State of the abandon'd Heathens, who, *St. Paul* tells us, were past Feeling.—The Apostle prays, that the *Ephesians* may abound in all Knowledge and Spiritual Understanding, or as it might be rendered, Spiritual Sensation.—And in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, the Minister prays, that the LORD may make the sick Person know and feel, that there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, in whom and thro' whom they may receive Health and Salvation, but only the Name of our Lord JESUS.—For there is a spiritual, as well as a corporeal Feeling, and though

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this is not communicated to us in a sensible Manner, as outward Objects affect our Senses, yet it is as real as any sensible or visible Sensation, and may be as truly felt and discerned by the Soul, as any Impression from without can be felt by the Body.--All that are born again of GOD, know that I lie not.

What think you, Sirs, did *Naaman* feel when he was cured of his Leprosy? Did the Woman feel Virtue coming out of JESUS CHRIST, when she touched the Hem of his Garment, and was cured of her bloody Issue? So surely may'st thou feel, O Believer, when JESUS CHRIST dwelleth in thy Heart. I pray GOD make you all know and feel this, e'er you depart hence.

Oh, *my Brethren*, my Heart is enlarged towards you. I trust I feel something of that hidden, but powerful Presence of CHRIST, whilst I am preaching to you. Indeed it is sweet, indeed it is exceeding comfortable. All the Harm I wish you, that without Cause are my Enemies, is, that you felt the like. Believe me, though it would be Hell to my Soul, to return to a natural State again, yet I would willingly change States with you for a little while, that you might know what it is to have CHRIST dwelling in your Hearts by Faith. Oh! do not turn your Backs. Do not let the Devil hurry you away. Be not afraid of Convictions. Do not think worse of the Doctrine, because preached without the Church Walls.—Our LORD, in the Days of his Flesh, preached on a Mount, a Ship, a Field; and I am persuaded many have felt his gracious Presence here.—Indeed we speak what we know.—Oh do not reject the Kingdom of GOD against yourselves.—Be so wise as to receive our Witness.—

I cannot,

I cannot, I will not let you go. Stay a little, let us reason together. — However lightly you may esteem your Souls, I know our LORD has set an unspeakable Value on them. He thought them worthy of his most precious Blood. — I beseech you therefore, O Sinners, be ye reconciled to GOD. I hope you do not fear being accepted in the Beloved. — Behold he calleth you. — Behold he prevents and follows you with his Mercy, and hath sent forth his Servants into the Highways and Hedges, to compel you to come in. Remember then, that at such an Hour, of such a Day, in such a Year, in this Place, you were all told what you ought to think concerning JESUS CHRIST. — If you now perish, it will not be for lack of Knowledge. — I am free from the Blood of you all. — You cannot say I have been preaching Damnation to you. — You cannot say I have, like legal Preachers, been requiring you to make Brick without Straw. I have not bid you make yourselves Saints, and then come to GOD. — But I have offer'd you Salvation on as cheap Terms as you can desire. — I have offer'd you CHRIST's whole Wisdom, CHRIST's whole Righteousness, CHRIST's whole Sanctification and Eternal Redemption, if you will but believe on him. — If you say you cannot believe, you say right; for Faith, as well as every other Blessing, is the Gift of GOD: But then wait upon GOD, and who knows but he may have Mercy on thee? Why do we not entertain more loving Thoughts of CHRIST? Or do you think he will have Mercy on others, and not on you? But are you not Sinners? And did not JESUS CHRIST come into the World to save Sinners? — If you say you are the chief of Sinners; I answer, that will be no

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Hindrance to your Salvation, indeed it will not, if you lay hold on him by Faith. Read the Evangelists, and see how kindly he behaved to his Disciples who fled from, and denied him. *Go tell my Brethren*, says he. He does not say, *Go tell those Traitors*; but, *Go tell my Brethren, and Peter*; as tho' he had said, *Go tell my Brethren in general, and poor Peter in particular, that I am risen*. Oh, comfort his poor drooping Heart, tell him I am reconciled to him. Bid him weep no more so bitterly. For tho' with Oaths and Curses he has thrice denied me, yet I have died for his Sins, I am risen again for his Justification, I freely forgive him all. — Thus slow to Anger, and of great Kindness, was our all-merciful High-Priest. And do you think he has changed his Nature, and forgets poor Sinners, now he is exalted to the Right-Hand of God? No, he is the same Yesterday, to Day and forever, and sitteth there only to make Intercession for us. — Come then, ye Harlots, come ye Publicans, come ye most abandoned Sinners, come and believe on JESUS CHRIST. Tho' the whole World despise you and cast you out, yet he will not disdain to take you up. Oh! amazing, Oh! infinitely condescending Love! even you he will not be ashamed to call his Brethren. And Oh! how will you escape if you neglect such a glorious Offer of Salvation? What would the damned Spirits, now in the Prison of Hell, give, if CHRIST was so freely offered to their Souls? And why are not we lifting up our Eyes in Torment? Does any one out of this great Multitude dare say, he does not deserve Damnation? If not, why are we left, and others taken away by Death? What is this but an Instance of God's free Grace, and
a Sign

a Sign of his good Will towards us? Oh then, let GOD's Goodness lead us to Repentance! Oh let there be Joy in Heaven over some of you repenting! Tho' we are in a Field, I am persuaded the blessed Angels are hovering now around us, and long, *as the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks*, to sing an Anthem at your Conversion. Blessed be GOD, I hope their Joy will be fulfilled. An awful Silence appears amongst us. I have good Hope that the Words that the LORD has enabled me to speak in your Ears this Day, have not altogether fallen to the Ground. Your Tears and deep Attention are an Evidence, that the LORD GOD is amongst us of a Truth. Come ye *Pharisees*, come and see, in spite of your Satanical Rage and Fury, the Lord JESUS is getting himself the Victory. And Brethren, I speak the Truth in CHRIST, I lie not, if one Soul of you, by the Blessing of GOD, be brought to think savingly of JESUS CHRIST this Day, I care not if my Enemies were permitted to carry me to Prison, and put my Feet fast in the Stocks, as soon as I have deliver'd this Sermon. Brethren, my Heart's Desire and Prayer to GOD is, that you may be saved. For this Cause I follow my Master without the Camp. I care not how much of his sacred Reproach I bear, so that some of you be converted from the Errors of your Ways. I rejoice, yea and I will rejoice. Ye Men, ye Devils, do your worst. The LORD who sent will support me. And when CHRIST, who is our Life, and whom I have now been preaching, shall appear, I also, together with his despised little Ones, shall appear with him in Glory.— And then, what will you think of CHRIST?— I know what you will think of him. You will

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then think him to be *the Fairest among ten Thousand*. You will then think and feel him to be a just and Sin-avenging Judge. Oh then be ye persuaded to kiss him lest he be angry, and so you be banished forever from the Presence of the Lord. Behold I come to you, as the Angel did to *Lot*. My dear Brethren, flee, flee for your Lives, haste, linger no longer in your spiritual *Sodom*, for otherwise you will be eternally destroyed. Numbers, no doubt, there are amongst you, that may regard me no more than *Lot's* Sons-in-law regarded him. I am persuaded I seem to some of you as one that mocks.—But I speak the Truth in CHRIST, I lie not; as sure as Fire and Brimstone rained from the LORD out of Heaven, to destroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, so surely, at the Great Day, shall the Vials of GOD's Wrath be poured on you, if you do not think seriously of, and act agreeable to the Gospel of the Lord's CHRIST. Behold I have told you before,—I pray GOD, all you that forget him may seriously think of what has been said, before he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

Now to GOD the Father, &c.

PRAYERS.

P R A Y E R S.

*A PRAYER for one entrusted with the
Education of Children.*

O Dearest JESU, who gatherest thy Lambs into thy Bosom, and didst solemnly command thy Servant *Peter*, to feed thy Lambs; grant I may shew that I love thee more than all Things, by doing as thou hast commanded him.

LORD, who am I, or what is in me, that thou should thus put Honour upon me, in making me any way instrumental to the preparing Souls for thee? O Saviour, I have sinned against Heaven, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son, much less to be employed in the Service of thy Children.

But since thou hast been pleased in me to shew forth all thy Mercy, and hast called me by thy good Providence to this blessed Work, grant that I may always remember, that the little Flock committed to my Charge, are bought with the Price of thy own most precious Blood. And let it therefore be my Meat and Drink, to feed them with the sincere Milk of thy Word, that they may grow thereby.

To this End, I beseech thee of thy free Grace, first to convert my own Soul, and cause me to become like a little Child myself, that from an experimental Knowledge of my own Corruptions,

R 6

I may

I may have my spiritual Senses exercised, to discern the first Emotions of Evil that may at any Time arise in their Hearts.

O give me, I beseech thee, a discerning Spirit, that I may search, and try, and examine the different Tempers of their Sin-sick Souls; and, like a skilful Physician, apply healing or corrosive Medicines, as their respective Maladies shall require.

Gracious JESU, let punishing be always my strange Work; and, if it be possible, grant that they may be all drawn to their Duty, as I would be drawn myself, by the Cords of Love. And when I am obliged to correct them, grant it may not be to shew my Authority, or gratify a corrupt Passion, but purely out of the same Motive from which thou dost correct us, to make them Partakers of thy Holiness.

Oh! keep me, I beseech thee, from being angry without a Cause: Permit me not rashly to be provoked by the Infirmities and Perverseness of their Infant Years; but grant I may shew all Long-suffering towards them. And by exercising such frequent Acts of Patience and Forbearance, grant, I myself may learn the Meekness and Gentleness of CHRIST.

O thou, who taughtest thy Disciples how to pray, pour down, I beseech thee, the Spirit of Grace and Supplication into their Hearts, that at all Times, and in all Places, they may both desire and know how to call upon thee by diligent Prayer.

Father, into thy Hands I commend my own and their Spirits: Look down from Heaven, the Habitation of thy Holiness, and bless them from thy holy Hill.

Keep

Keep them, oh keep them unspotted from the World; grant they may fly youthful Lusts, and remember thee, their Creator, in the Days of their Youth. Train them, I beseech thee, in the Way wherein they should go; and when they are old, let them not depart from it.

O thou, who didst sanctify *Jeremiah* from the Womb, and calledst young *Samuel* betimes, to wear a linnen Ephod before thee, sanctify their whole Spirits, Souls and Bodies, and preserve them blameless, till the second Coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

O thou, who didst endue *Solomon* with Grace, to chuse Wisdom before Riches and Honour; incline their Hearts to make the same Choice of thee, their only Good; and may they always renounce and triumph over the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life.

Finally, do thou, O blessed JESU, who at twelve Years old wast found in the Temple, sitting among the Doctors, both hearing and asking them Questions, grant that these Children may love to tread the Courts of thy House, and have their Ears opened betimes, to receive the Discipline of Wisdom, that so, if it be thy good Pleasure, to prolong the Time of their Pilgrimage here on Earth, they may shine as Lights in the World; or, if thou seekest it best, to bring down their Strength in their Journey, and to shorten their Days, they may be early fitted by Purity of Heart, to sing eternal *Hallelujahs* to thee, the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, in the Kingdom of Heaven for ever.

Grant this, O Father, for thy dear Son's Sake,
CHRIST JESUS, our LORD, Amen, Amen.

A PRAYER

A PRAYER for a Servant.

O THOU HIGH and LOFTY ONE, who inhabitest Eternity, yet art pleased to dwell with the humble Heart: O blessed JESU, who hast made of one Blood all Nations under Heaven, with whom there is no Respect of Persons, and who, in the Days of thy Flesh, didst go down to heal a *Centurion's* sick Servant; have Mercy, I beseech thee, on me, even me also a poor Servant. Stretch forth the Right Hand of thy Power, to heal all the Diseases of my Sin-sick Soul, and enable me, by thy Holy Spirit, faithfully to discharge the several Duties of that Vocation, whereto I am called by thee my GOD. Give me Grace, I most humbly beseech thee, to obey my Master, according to the Flesh, in all Things; not with Eye-service, as a Man-pleaser, but with Singleness of Heart, as unto CHRIST; knowing, that whatsoever any Man doeth, the same he shall receive of the LORD, whether he be bond or free.

Make my Obedience to my Master on Earth, like to that which the holy Angels pay thee in Heaven. When I am commanded to go, may I go; when I am required to come, may I come; whatsoever I am bid to do agreeable to thy Will, may I do it heartily, as unto the LORD, and not unto Men. But if at any Time, O LORD, thou shouldst, to try what is in my Heart, permit me to be tempted to do any Wickedness, O do

do thou give me Grace, as thou didst *Joseph*, patiently to submit to a Prison and to Death itself, rather than sin against thee, my GOD. Knowing that it is Thankworthy, if a Man for Conscience towards GOD, endure Grief, suffering wrongfully. Enable me, O LORD, to shew good Fidelity in all Things committed to my Charge. Do thou, who blessedst *Abraham's* Servant, when he went to take a Wife for his Master's Son, *Isaac*; so bless me in all my Master's Business, that he may see, as *Potiphar* did, that that the LORD maketh all that I do to prosper in my Hands.

Keep, O LORD, also the Door of my Lips, that I offend at no Time with my Tongue; let a false Tongue be far from me, and let me never lie unto my Master, as *Gebazi* did. O let no such Unfaithfulness cleave unto me; lest by being a Partaker with him in his Crime, I partake also in his Punishment. Bridle also my Tongue from ever answering again: May all Sullenness and Peevishness of Temper be put away from me, with all Passion: May I learn of thee, O Holy JESU, to be meek and lowly in Heart; O make me patient of Reproof, willing to be taught, and subject with all Fear and Godly Reverence, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward. Or if ever, through the Weakness of the Flesh, I should offend in this Point, as *Hagar* did against *Sarah*, enable me, I beseech thee, immediately to repent, and to return again to my Obedience. Grant also, O LORD, I may behave holily and unblameably to my Fellow-Servants: Let no corrupt Communication, nor foolish Talking, or Jestings, which is not convenient, at any Time come out of my Mouth, but rather

rather giving of Thanks: May our Conversation be always seasoned with the Salt of thy Holy Word, and such as may tend to the Edifying one another.

Endue us all with that Charity, which hideth a Multitude of Sins; and if ever, O LORD, thy Glory should call me to bring up an ill Report to my Master against any of my Fellow-Servants, which I beseech thee, of thine infinite Mercies, I may never have Occasion to do; grant it may be done with Gentleness and Compassion, not to insinuate myself into my Master's Favour, but to prevent them sinning against thee, and thereby ruining their own Souls. Keep us, we beseech thee, from striving among ourselves, as *Abraham's* and *Lot's* Herdsmen did, about any of the Concerns of this Life; but grant we may be always provoking each other to Love and to good Works. Preserve us, we beseech thee, from envying one another, either the Favour of our Master, or any Blessing whatsoever. Let us not seek our own, but each our Brother's Welfare, as Members of the same Body, as Disciples of the same LORD; when one of us suffers, let all of us suffer; when one of us rejoices, let all of us rejoice with him: Make us pitiful and tender-hearted to each other; and if at any Time we should have a Quarrel, enable us, O LORD, immediately to forgive one another, even as thou GOD for CHRIST's Sake, hast forgiven us.

Finally, O LORD, endue us with a deep Humility, that we may in Brotherly Love prefer one another, and in Lowliness of Mind each of us esteem his Brother better than himself. O hear all our Prayers for our Master, and grant that he and his Household may faithfully serve thee

thee our LORD. O make him as devout as *Cornelius*, and us, like the Soldiers that waited upon him, devout also. That thus adorning thy Holy Gospel in all Things, we may, at thy second Coming to judge the World, be rewarded according as we have improved the different Talents which we have received from thee, O glorious Redeemer, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one GOD, World without End. *Amen, Amen.*

A PRAYER for one under Spiritual Desertion.

O Ever blessed and most compassionate Redeemer, who wast in all Things tempted like as we are, Sin only excepted. — O thou Lover of Souls, who in the Days of thy Flesh didst offer up strong Cries and Tears, and wast heard in that thou fearedst. — O thou Restorer of Mankind, who wast in such an Agony in the Garden, that thou sweatest great Drops of Blood, falling to the Ground. — O thou Almighty High Priest, who, when thro' the eternal Spirit thou wast about to make thy Soul an Offering for Sin, hadst thy own Divinity withdrawn from thee, and didst cry out in the Bitterness of thy Soul, *My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?* — O thou, who now sittest at the Right Hand of the Father, continually to make Intercession for us. Look down, I beseech thee, upon me, thy unworthy Servant. — For thou hast turned away thy Face, and lo! I am troubled. — Thou hast taken off my Chariot-Wheels, and I drive heavily. — Thou hast permitted a Cloud to over-shadow me,
and

and an horrible Darkness, Fearfulness and Dread, to overwhelm me, so that my Soul would be exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death, did I not believe thou wouldst yet turn again, and visit me.

Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; but if my Soul cannot be made perfect, unless I drink it, thy Holy, thy Blessed Will be done.

Lo here I am! Deal with me as it seemeth good in thy Sight.—Only let thy Grace be sufficient for me; and in the midst of my Agony send down, I beseech thee, an Angel from Heaven to strengthen me.

LORD, thou knowest that Satan has desired to have me, that he may sift me as Wheat; O grant that my Faith fail not.

Suffer, O suffer him not to get an Advantage over me, for thou art not ignorant of his Devices.—O let him not so prevail against me, as to make me entertain hard Thoughts of thee my most loving Master, and compassionate Redeemer: For I know thou of very Faithfulness hast caused me thus to be troubled;—And dost afflict me for no other Reason, but to make me Partaker of thy Holiness.

Give me, O give me, the Shield of Faith, and enable me to repel all the fiery blasphemous Thoughts, that the Wicked One shall at any Time dart into my Mind.—Let me drive them off as carefully as *Abraham* did the Birds that came to devour his Sacrifice.—And oh! let him never tempt me to think thou wilt impute them to me for Sin.

LORD, thou only knowest the present Dryness and Barrenness of my Soul, and how liable I am to be tempted to fret against thee, O LORD, and

to seek Pleasure in the Creature, when I can find no sensible Satisfaction in thee, my great Redeemer, who art GOD, blessed forever.

But, I beseech thee, keep my Soul quiet and composed, and for thy Mercy's Sake enable me only to take Pleasure in thee, and to sit down solitary in the Bitterness of my Soul, and patiently wait till I can draw Comfort from thee, the Fountain of living Waters, rather than hew out to myself broken Cisterns, that will hold no Water.

Never, never let me fall out with any of thy Ordinances, or think, I do not please thee in my holy Duties, because I have no inward sensible Pleasure in them myself.

Enable me to walk by Faith, and not by Sight, and to seek thee in the Use of all appointed Means, though it be sorrowing; being assured that, after three Days, I shall find thee in the Temple; or that thou wilt make thyself known unto me, by breaking of Bread, or in some other Way.

LORD, I believe, help thou my Unbelief, that I am now talking with thee as certainly as *Mary* was, when thou didst converse with her at the Sepulchre; tho' she knew it not. — In thy due Time reveal thyself again to me, as thou didst to her; and let me hear the Voice of my Beloved.

Thou hast promised, thou wilt not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but wilt with the Temptation make a Way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it. — Fulfil, O LORD, this thy Promise — And after I have suffered a while, strengthen, stablish, settle, and visit me, as thou didst thy Servant
Abraham,

Abraham, when he return'd from the Slaughter of the five Kings.

LORD, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon me; restore to me the Joy of thy Salvation; and when my Heart is duly prepared, and humbled by these inward Trials, grant me a feeling Possession of thee, my GOD, for the Sake of thy dear Son, JESUS CHRIST, our LORD. *Amen, Amen.*

A PRAYER for one under the Displeasure of Relations, for being Religious.

BLESSED LORD, who hast commanded us to call upon thee in Time of Trouble, and thou wilt deliver us; and hast always shewn thyself to be a GOD, hearing Prayer, mighty and willing to save; hear me now, I pray thee, when I call upon thee; for Trouble is at Hand.

Thou seest, O LORD, how many of my Brethren, according to the Flesh, persecute me for thy Name's Sake; so that I must renounce them, or decline openly professing thee before Men.

But GOD forbid I should love Father or Mother, Brethren or Sisters, more than thee, and thereby prove myself not worthy of thee. No! I have long since given thee my Soul and my Body; so, lo! I now freely give thee my Friends also.

For I now find by Experience, that as it was formerly, so it is now. — They that are born after the Flesh, do persecute those that are born after the Spirit. — That thou camest not to send
Peace

Peace on Earth, but a Sword.—And that, unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be thy Disciple.

Lo! I come to perform this Part of thy Will, O my God; being assured that whosoever forsaketh Father or Mother, Brethren or Sisters, Houses or Lands for thy Sake, or the Gospel, shall receive a hundred-fold in this present Life, with Persecution, and in the World to come Life everlasting.

I trust, O LORD, it is for thy Sake alone that I now make an Offering of the Favour of my Friends to thee; for thou knowest, O LORD, how continually they cry out, *Spare thyself*; tho' I am doing no more than thy holy Word strictly requires me to do.

But do thou, O blessed Saviour, who saidst unto *Peter*, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, enable me to stop my Ears to their false Insinuations, charm they never so sweetly; for *they savour not the Things that be of God, but the Things that be of Men*; and unless, O LORD, thou dost help, they will be an Offence unto me, and cause me to deny the LORD that bought me.

Far be it from me, O LORD, to be surprized, because of those Offences; for thou hast long since denounced Woe against the World because of Offences; and, I find, it is needful for my Soul, that such Offences should come, to try what is in my Heart; and to try whether I love thee in Deed and in Truth.

Blessed therefore, for ever blessed be thy holy Name, that I am accounted worthy to suffer for thy Name's Sake. O let me rejoice, and be exceeding glad, that my Reward shall be great in Heaven.

O let

O let me never regard any of their Threatnings; for when my Father and Mother forsaketh me, thou, O LORD, I am assured, wilt take me up.

Take me, O take me into the Arms of thy Mercy; for henceforward know I no Man after the Flesh. And whosoever doth the Will of my Father, the same shall be my Brother, and Sister, and Mother.

I know, O LORD, I know that this will expose me to the Derision and Persecution of those that are round about me.

But do thou, who didst seek for the poor Beggar, after he was cast out by the Jewish Council, and didst reveal thyself unto him, reveal thyself to me also, when my Name is cast out as Evil by my Friends and the World. — Though they curse, yet bless thou me, O LORD; and enable me, I most humbly beseech thee, to pray for them, even when they most despitefully use me, and persecute me; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

It is owing, O LORD, to thy free Mercy alone, that I have in any Measure been enlightened to know thee, and the Power of thy Resurrection. O let the same Grace be sufficient for them also, and make thy Almighty Power to be known in their Conversion.

Thou didst once, O blessed Saviour, magnify thy Goodness in turning thy Servant *Paul*, from being a bitter Persecutor, to be a zealous Preacher of thy Gospel; and madest the trembling Jailor cry out, even to those whose Feet he had hurt in the Stocks, *Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?*

Look

Look down therefore, I beseech thee, in Pity and Compassion, on those of my own Household; and after I am converted myself, make me, or some other, instrumental to strengthen these my weak Brethren; that tho' we are now divided amongst ourselves, two against three, and three against two, yet we may at last, all with one Heart and one Mouth, glorify thee, O LORD; that thou mayst come and abide with us, and love us as thou didst *Lazarus*, *Mary*, and her Sister *Martha*. Grant this, O Saviour, for thy infinite Merits Sake. *Amen and Amen.*

*A PRAYER for one desiring to be awakened
to an Experience of the New-Birth.*

Blessed JESUS, thou hast told us in thy Gospel, that unless a Man be born again of the Spirit, and his Righteousness exceed the outward Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, he cannot in any wise enter into the Kingdom of God. Grant me therefore, I beseech thee, this true Circumcision of the Heart; and send down thy blessed Spirit to work in me that inward Holiness which alone can make me meet to partake of the Heavenly Inheritance with the Saints in Light.

Create in me, I beseech thee, a new Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me. For of whom shall I seek for Succour but of thee, O LORD, with whom alone this is possible? LORD, if thou wilt thou canst make me whole. O say unto my Soul, as thou didst once unto the poor Leper, I will, be thou renewed. Have Com-
passion

passion on me, O LORD, as thou once hadst unto blind *Bartimeus*, who sat by the Way-side begging.

LORD, thou knowest all Things, thou knowest what I would have thee to do.--Grant, LORD, that I may receive my Sight. For I am conceived and born in Sin, my whole Head is sick, my whole Heart is faint; from the Crown of my Head to the Sole of my Feet I am full of Wounds and Bruises, and putrifying Sores. And yet I see not. O awaken me, tho' it be with Thunder, to a sensible Feeling of the Corruptions of my fallen Nature? and for thy Mercies Sake suffer me no longer to sit in Darknes, and the Shadow of Death.

O prick me, prick me to the Heart! Dart down a Ray of that all-quickening Light which struck thy Servant *Saul* to the Ground; and make me cry out with the trembling Jailor, *What shall I do to be saved?*

LORD, behold I pray; and blush, and am confounded that I never prayed on this wise before.

But I have looked upon myself as rich, not considering that I was poor and blind, and naked. I have trusted to my own Righteousness.—I flattered myself I was whole, and therefore blindly thought I had no Need of thee, O great Physician of Souls, to heal my Sickness.

But being now convinced by thy free Mercy, that my own Righteousness is as filthy Rags, and that he is only a true Christian who is one inwardly; behold, with strong Cryings and Tears, and Groanings that cannot be uttered, I beseech thee visit me with thy free Spirit, and say unto these dry Bones, *Live.*

I confess, O LORD, that thy Grace is thy own, and that thy Spirit bloweth where he listeth. And waite thou to deal with me after my Deserts; and reward me according to my Wickedness, I had long since been given over to a reprobate Mind, and had my Conscience seared as with a red hot Iron.

But, O LORD, since by sparing me so long thou hast shewn that thou wouldst not the Death of a Sinner.—And since thou hast promised that thou wilt give thy holy Spirit to those that ask it. I hope thy Goodness and Long-suffering is intended to lead me to Repentance, and that thou wilt not turn away thy Face from me.

Thou seeest, O LORD, thou seeest, that with the utmost Earnestness and Humility of Soul, I ask thy holy Spirit of thee; and am resolved, in Confidence of thy Promise, who canst not lie, to seek and knock till I find a Door of Mercy opened unto me.

O LORD save me, or I perish; visit, O visit me with thy Salvation.—Lighten my Eyes, that I sleep not in Death.—O let me no longer continue a Stranger to myself,—But quicken me, quicken me with thy free Spirit, that I may know myself even as I am known.

Behold here I am. Let me do and suffer what seemeth good in thy Sight, only renew me by thy Spirit in my Mind, and make me a Partaker of thy Divine Nature.—So shall I praise thee all the Days of my Life, and give thee Thanks for ever in the Glories of thy Kingdom, O most adorable Redeemer; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Praise, both now and for evermore. Amen.

A PRAYER for one newly awakened to a Sense
of the Divine Life.

O Almighty and everlasting Father, who in
the Beginning spake and it was done, say-
ing, *Let there be Light, and there was Light.*—O
most adorable Redeemer, who, when Adam had
eaten the forbidden Fruit, wast revealed as the
Seed of the Woman, and didst in the Fullness of
Time, die an accursed Death to save us from the
Guile and Power of our Sins, and thereby break
the Serpent's Head.—O blessed and eternal Spirit,
who didst once move upon the Face of the great
Deep, who didst overshadow the blessed Virgin,
who didst descend on the Son of God at his Bap-
tism, and didst come down after his Ascension in
fiery Tongues upon the Heads of each of his Ap-
ostles.—O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity,
three Persons and one God, thy whose Consulta-
tion we were first made, and into whose Name
we have been again baptized.—Accept my humble
and hearty Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving
for calling me out of Darkness into thy marvel-
lous Light; for quickening me when dead in Tref-
passes and Sins, and moving upon the Face of my
polluted and disordered Soul.

Thou hast promised, O LORD, that thou wilt
not quench the smoking Flax, or break the
bruised Reed. And thou hast told us, that thy
holy Spirit should be in us, as a Well of Water
springing up unto eternal Life. Finish therefore,
I beseech thee, the good Work begun in my Soul,
and now thou hast called me, never let me lie
down again.

Thou seest, O LORD, the good Seed sown in
my

my Heart is yet but as a very small Grain of Mustard-seed.—O continue to water with the Dew of thy heavenly Blessing what thy own Right Hand hath planted, and it shall become a great Tree.

Thou hast touched the Eye of my Mind by thy Divine Power, and I see Men as Trees walking. Let thy holy Spirit, by his blessed Influences, more and more remove the remaining Scales, till I at length see all Things clearly.

With Shame and Confusion of Face, O LORD, I confess I am unworthy of this and all other thy Mercies. For I have long since done Despite to the Spirit of Grace, crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to open Shame. But do thou, who art rich in Mercy to all that call upon thee in Faithfulness, forgive me what is past; and grant I may from henceforward work out my Salvation with Fear and Trembling, since thou hast so graciously wrought in me both to will and to do after thy good Pleasure.

I know, O LORD, that now thou hast begun to deliver me out of my natural and worse than Egyptian Bondage; I must expect to pass through a barren and dry Wilderness, that there are Lions in the Way, that the Sons of *Anah* are to be grappled with before I attain to the true Sabbath of the Soul.

But thou, Angel of the everlasting Covenant, who sentest thy ministering Spirits to rescue righteous *Lot*; who leddest thy Sheep by the Hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*; and didst appear in a Vision to *Ananias*, commanding him to go and lay his Hands upon thy Servant *Saul*;—send me alway a faithful and experienced Pastor, who may lead me

me by the Hand, and keep me from lingering in my spiritual *Sodom*, by his prudent Directions under thee, and preserve me from the Snares and Fury of my spiritual Adversaries, which otherwise may overtake and destroy my Soul.

O make me teachable like a little Child.— Convert my Soul, and bring it low.—Grant I may be willing to learn what Things I ought to do, and also may have Power faithfully to fulfil the same.

Strengthen me, I beseech thee, by thy holy Spirit, to cut off a Right Hand, to pluck out a Right Eye, lay aside every Weight, especially the Sin that doth most easily beset me;—to forsake Father and Mother, Brethren and Sisters, yea, and my own Life also, rather than not be thy Disciple.

O suffer me not to deceive my own Soul by a partial Reformation.—Search me and try me, and examine my Heart, and let no secret unmortified Lust or Passion ever keep me from Life everlasting.

LORD, I am not my own, Thou hast bought me with the Price of thy Son's most precious Blood.

Thou hast often required, and lo! I now give thee my Heart, to the best of my Knowledge, without secretly keeping back the least Part. For whom have I in Heaven but thee, and what is there on Earth that I can desire in Comparison of thee!

O mould me into thy own most blessed Image, my LORD and my GOD. Fill me with thy Grace here, fit me for thy Glory hereafter. Even so, LORD JESUS. Amen and Amen.

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